

# DAMON CONNOLLY

Fall, 2015

SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 1

## Dear Friends,

Marin County has been fortunate during this dry, high fire risk season. With devastating fires in neighboring counties in the front of our thoughts, it's a good time to make sure your family has developed a response plan. Knowing the vulnerabilities of your homes and workplaces will help when faced with the unexpected. Being prepared isn't just for you and your family; just as our firefighters have had to provide assistance to other areas, you may be called upon to assist your neighbors. Weather conditions, natural disasters, or other events can prevent us from getting home, or cause us to deviate from our usual routine—a plan is necessary to provide a response roadmap for you and yours. [Ready Marin](http://readymarin.org/plan-prepare/) provides some guidelines and suggestions: <http://readymarin.org/plan-prepare/>

While still in the high fire season, you might find some of the information on the [FireSafeMarin](http://www.firesafemarin.org) website useful: <http://www.firesafemarin.org>. Marin County Fire's Crew Superintendent for our Tamalpais Fire Crew, Tim Walsh, provides some interesting and important tips after his [experience with the Valley Fire in Lake County](#).

We have heard predictions that we will have a wet winter, and let's hope so. That said, we need to tend to our homes and property and make sure that we are prepared for high winds and torrential downpours that could stress our infrastructure. The County is already at work, clearing drainage and testing pumps and generators, but private property owners have the responsibility to clear their own drainage systems and trim trees and brush to withstand rough weather.

Take a look at the meetings coming up on the Board agenda in the next month (page 7). These are all issues that have generated a lot of interest in our communities and I look forward to hearing input from County staff on these issues, feedback from the public, and comments from my Board colleagues.

Also, on October 20 we will be bringing to the Board a revised draft ordinance regulating Medical Marijuana dispensaries, taking into account state bills that are awaiting the Governor's signature. Please make sure you are subscribed to the [County webpage](http://www.marincounty.org/main/marijuana-dispensary-ordinance) to get the latest information and schedule: <http://www.marincounty.org/main/marijuana-dispensary-ordinance>.

Damon



## Topics Addressed in this Issue:

- Tour of Opportunity Center
- Grand Opening of Stafford Lake Bike Park
- Lucas Valley Road Safety Improvements
- Juvenile Hall
- Local Office Hours
- Floating Island
- Marin Mobility for Seniors
- Upcoming BOS Meetings of Interest
- Schedule of Upcoming Meetings

## Future Updates on Marinwood Plaza

We've established a dedicated newsflash system where those interested can receive future updates on Marinwood Plaza.

[Click here to receive future newsflashes!](#)

## District 1 Newsletter

### Tour of the Opportunity Center in Palo Alto

On August 27, I joined my colleagues Supervisor Katie Rice, County Administrator Matthew Hymel, Health and Human Services Director Dr. Grant Colfax, along with San Rafael Mayor Gary Phillips, Councilmember Kate Colin, City Manager Jim Schutz, San Rafael Chamber of Commerce CEO Joanne Webster and others on a tour of a homeless day center in Palo Alto as we look at what different communities are doing to address the issues of homelessness. We also spent time with the Downtown Streets Team discussing their job development strategies and attending one of their weekly “*Success Meetings*,” where team members shared their experiences in securing jobs and getting into housing.

The County and City of San Rafael are jointly exploring the campus model—a one-stop location for programs and services that will help people get back on their feet. Palo Alto was moved to action when heavy winter storms wiped out creekside encampments where many local homeless in their community were living. Their emergency response shelter was flooded during that season as well. It was a call to action for the community, bringing into focus both the human cost of homelessness and the financial burden on the community.

Palo Alto’s cost analysis revealed that the average cost to the community of a homeless person who was a high utilizer of emergency rooms for health care, cause for potential police and fire calls, and subject of court related costs and incarceration was up to \$47,000 per year. In contrast, “Housing First,” a model that provides permanent housing with support services that costs on average \$20,000 per person per year and has been shown to be more effective in promoting lifestyle stability, reducing the revolving door style demand on vital services that are intended to be reserved for emergencies.

Palo Alto’s Community Working Group includes stakeholders from the County, the City, private non-profits, the faith community, business leaders, philanthropic interests and community leaders. They collaborated to determine how they could best address these issues, evaluating temporary shelter vs. permanent housing, a central location vs. scattered sites, etc.

The Opportunity Center provides a location where people who are homeless can go for services, or to just get off the streets. It is both a day center, and a site for 89 units of permanent supportive housing. They are fortunate to have Stanford University and the Stanford Medical Center providing financial as well as ongoing in-kind support for these programs. The permanent housing has provided homes for 134 people since the center opened, 95% of whom were considered chronically homeless and referred by local social service agencies. The city estimate that homelessness has decreased in their community by 50% since the Opportunity Center opened.

What I walked away with is a sense that each community creates its own model to best address the greatest concerns of the community. It’s an organic process. We are already examining what a campus would look like here in Marin. It will likely be different than Palo Alto’s, or those in other communities, specifically geared towards the needs of our community. It will be up to us collectively to decide whether the “Housing First” model can work in this area, given the extremely high cost of housing, or whether we will be leaning toward short term shelter, or a blend of both shelter and housing.

What *is* working for Palo Alto, San Jose and for San Rafael is the Downtown Streets Team program. They provide a reason for people to get up in the morning, clear-headed and ready to work; a supportive team experience where people feel like they are part of something, and where people who are homeless start to feel there is a way up and out. The “Scarlett H” on one’s forehead, the stigma of being homeless, can be removed once someone feels like they are employable and capable of being productive.

I am looking forward to work closely with the City of San Rafael, business and community leaders to improve the situation for the community as well as for those living without shelter.

## District 1 Newsletter

### Grand Opening of Stafford Lake Bike Park

The much-anticipated [Stafford Lake Bike Park](#) officially opened on August 22 amidst much fanfare. The Phase I trails include a kids learn-to-ride zone pump track, beginner zone pump track (all ages), skills perimeter trail, dual slalom gravity zone, and the progression jump course has three jump lines with varying degrees of difficulty. The bike park is free and open to the public though there is a fee to park your vehicle at Stafford Lake Park. If you plan to park at Stafford Lake Park on a continual basis, consider purchasing an [annual parks pass](#), which also provides parking access at other regional parks in Marin County. Find out about any Stafford Lake Bike Park alert and closure information by calling (415) 473-JUMP (5867) and download a [trail map](#) on our webpage. <http://www.marincountyparks.org/depts/pk/divisions/parks/stafford-lake-bike-park>



*Bicyclists enjoying the new Stafford Lake Bike Park features.*

### Lucas Valley Road Safety Improvements

We were all troubled and frustrated with the recent truck accident and paint spillage on Lucas Valley Road, especially given that this isn't the first time we've had issues with trucks on this road. I have good news to report thanks to the swift action of our Department of Public Works in responding to this incident.

As you know, there is currently signage advising against trucks with a length of 40 feet or more using Lucas Valley Road. Our Department of Public Works is working with County Counsel on a prohibition ordinance for trucks 36 feet or longer. That would mean new signage indicating that large trucks are not allowed on Lucas Valley Road, and that any trucks using the road in violation would be cited.

What's more, we've finally got the attention of CalTrans on this issue on two fronts. In the past, requests for advisory signage closer on the freeway and exits, where there is an opportunity to actually influence drivers' decisions, went ignored. Not only do we plan to have signs prohibiting long trucks posted in these locations, but we've learned that a Highway Safety Improvement Program grant application that has been in the queue for years has finally been selected. This will provide funding for improvements to this stretch of road and make it safer.

As for resolution on the latest incident, the cleanup of the paint that was spilled was overseen and managed by the Marin County Department of Public Works, however the California Department of Fish and Wildlife was ultimately responsible for signing off on the completed process and deeming the incident "clean." Fish and Wildlife set a guideline of seeing no paint at all in the soil for this evaluation.

In this instance, hot and dry conditions were a stroke of good luck, in that these conditions both helped dry the paint before it seeped deeply into the soil, and prevented water and stream contamination. The paint spilled was road paint, and attempting to scrub the rocks that were affected clean or removing those rocks would be more chemically disturbing and invasive than leaving them as is. Rainwater will run over the paint on the rocks in the same fashion as it does over the paint on our roads.

We will keep you posted as these safety improvements progress.

*Damon*

## Juvenile Hall

**By Chief Probation Officer Mike Daly, reprinted from "Condition of Probation", department newsletter**

Earlier this year, the Marin County Grand Jury investigated our Juvenile Hall. I was very comfortable knowing that our Juvenile Hall has excellent staff, offers great programming, is safe for the minors housed there and passes all state and local inspections usually with high compliments.

The Probation Department takes utilizing alternatives to detention and graduated sanctions very seriously. We are deeply committed to having our eyes on reducing ethnic disparities inside our institution and have spent years examining our role in mitigating that issue. We have also spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in programs providing family counseling, drug and alcohol treatment, mental health counseling, leadership and mentoring opportunities, healthy after school programming and restorative justice efforts in our communities.

So what does this all add up to? A low population. Our Juvenile Hall has a rated capacity to hold 40 minors. During the calendar year of 2014, we averaged about nine minors. The Grand Jury saw this, took note of our overall budget, and came to the conclusion that our expenses per minor came to about \$900 per day. I admit that it is expensive and I told that to the grand jury members every time I met with them. I also told them I feel like we are being punished for doing a good job!

Our department is very well trained in the negative effects a juvenile hall detention can have on a minor presently going through a detention period as well as the negative effects into the future. We try our absolute hardest to work with minors and their families during tough times. Juvenile Hall is our last resort and every detention must meet strict legal criteria. The most common legal criteria used when detaining a child is because the *minor presents a danger to himself, a danger to others or a danger to the property of others*. A minor is also afforded a court appearance within 48 hours and a judge must also make a decision if detention is warranted. With the overall philosophy of graduated sanctions and keeping families together combined with strict legal criteria for detaining a youth, it is no wonder our population at juvenile hall is low. The overall crime rate and levels of detention are down across the nation. Most juvenile halls in California are at half capacity.

The Grand Jury ultimately concluded that the Marin County Board of Supervisors should close Juvenile Hall by the end of fiscal year 2016-17 and contract with a neighboring agency (either Sonoma or Napa) in order to save money. The Grand Jury deemed running a Juvenile Hall in Marin County is too expensive and the grounds should be repurposed for another county need.

I disagree and I'll tell you why. First, the two probation chiefs from Napa and Sonoma didn't want anything to do with the Grand Jury's suggestion. These are two of the more senior chiefs in California. They both know all too well how dynamics can change with a difficult minor let alone another 10-20 minors infused into their own juvenile halls. The gang tension, bullying and differing policies all came into play in their decision. They wanted no part of it.

Second, minors taken into custody by local law enforcement would be significantly impacted. The primary agencies responsible for 90 percent of the bookings would now be forced to drive a minor out of county for the booking process. Depending on traffic and booking times, that officer would be off their community patrol responsibilities for 2 to 3 hours. That is an unacceptable level of the community being compromised of public safety while this burdensome process is fulfilled.

***Continued on next page***

## District 1 Newsletter

### Juvenile Hall, continued

Third, the public defender represents almost all of the minors in Juvenile Hall. They are at Juvenile Hall almost every day. A 4 mile drive would then turn into a 35 mile ride into a much larger institution. The amount of time needed to now do their job would be significantly compromised and additional staff would be needed.

Fourth, long ago, this department decided having mental health staff available to the minors inside the institution was in the best interest of our minors and staff. That tradition has carried through all previous chief probation officers and I intend to keep it that way as well. In my opinion, our minors would not receive the same level of mental health care in other facilities. That is unacceptable.

Lastly, separating minors from their families and primary support system goes against the core of what we do serving youth. This was also pointed out by the Sonoma and Napa Chief Probation Officers. Having minors separated by 30 or more miles would essentially halt any visitation which is so important to a minor. Minors often decompensate when they feel lonely, not loved or forgotten. When minors feel this way, they act out in ways that are harmful to them or others. You cannot put a price on those types of things.

On Tuesday September 15<sup>th</sup>, I went before the Board of Supervisors and explained our Department's commitment to working with children and families on the front end. I told the Board that we provide alternatives to detention, mental health services, drug and alcohol services, mentoring and leadership opportunities and comprehensive supervision. We do all of these things with the belief that it has long term results and keeps young people out of our very expensive adult criminal justice system. That philosophical position has been foundational since I arrived in this department. Major studies back this approach and we are committed to it.

The Board of Supervisors agreed with our position to not close Juvenile Hall and said our children our best served in our own community. They also firmly agreed with our above stated philosophical position on how to best treat our youth. It was an emphatic stamp of support for how we administer our Juvenile Hall and Juvenile Services Divisions. I am proud of the work our staff does every day.

The next step is to work with all of our stakeholders to look at the future of Juvenile Hall in Marin County. I encourage everyone to think big with providing the best possible service to our public at the forefront of our discussion.

*Mike Daly, Chief Probation Officer*

### "Local Office Hours" Coming to a Café Near You!

In order to accommodate people who may find it inconvenient to get to the Civic Center during normal business hours, we are scheduling some "local office hours" in communities around the district. We have met with constituents so far at Marinwood Market, the downtown Farmers Market, Aroma Café, Bogie's and Scotty's Market. **Our next scheduled "local office hours" will be at Andy's Market in Sun Valley on Thursday, October 1, 5:15-6:15pm.** These opportunities are intended to provide for informal conversation on issues of interest to you. Come on by and say hello!

## Floating Island Biofilter Will Make Its Debut at Civic Center Lagoon for the Bioneers Conference

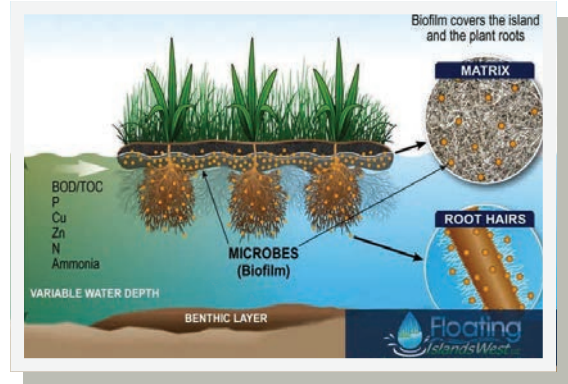
Civic Center Watershed Restoration (CCWR), a project of the Gallinas Watershed Council, will be debuting a Floating Island Biofilter at the Civic Center Lagoon in time for the opening of the Bioneers Conference in October.

With native plantings on the surface and roots in the water, the islands provide natural water filtration and shaded cooling. Floating Island Biofilters provide benefit to the watershed through the use of available nutrients, cooling, oxygenation and the fostering of habitat and local ecology. The CCWR Floating Island Biofilter Project was conceived in August 2014 as a Master Class 41 project for the Environmental Forum of Marin.

The working group reached out to diverse stakeholders and engaged them in the exploration of environmentally friendly approaches to supporting key elements of the watersheds, and specifically, the Civic Center Lagoon and nearby South Fork of Gallinas Creek.

This CCWR Floating Island Biofilter Project began in spirit in 2002, and formally in October 2014 at the Bioneers Conference, an annual event occurring at the Marin Center since 2000

Bioneer John Todd helped define and perfect floating island biofilter science. This project is conceived as a learning collaboration with the Bioneers, County staff, the Gallinas Watershed Council and The Marin School of Environmental Leadership. It will be the first hands-on activity at a Bioneers conference and is a unique opportunity for outreach and education at the Lagoon. We are all excited by this demonstration of Bioneers technology in a local environment.



## Marin Mobility Services for Seniors

**By Allan Bortel (reprinted from Great Age)**

A concerted effort by the County of Marin Board of Supervisors and its Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), supported by the Commission on Aging, has resulted in mobility programs that keep getting better. A comprehensive guide book was published this past May by Marin Transit. Call 415-226-0855 for a copy of "Marin in Motion," available in English and Spanish. The online version is available at: [www.marinaccess.org](http://www.marinaccess.org).

There are several unique (to Marin) programs, which many residents may not be aware of. One is Catch-a-Ride, a subsidized taxi program for all those over the age of 80 and for those over 60 who are unable to drive a car. This program has recently been under pressure because of a shortage of taxis, but this is slowly being remedied. You can find out more and sign up at Whistlestop's Marin Access Travel Navigators at 415-454-0902. The same phone number (415-454-0902) is a central service for other transportation programs, such as Paratransit (need doctor approval) and some volunteer driver programs.

One of the best deals for seniors and disabled residents is the reduced fare on regular buses and Golden Gate ferries. For only \$1.00, with transfers included, they can get all over the county. All buses have disabled access as well as bike racks. Other fares to destinations outside the county are discounted 50%. Clipper cards are now required on all Golden Gate transit. The senior version of the card is sold at the San Rafael transit center. The online version of the form is available at: [www.clippercard.com](http://www.clippercard.com)

## Board-Related Meetings

The following websites relate to positions Supervisor Connolly holds. You can find meetings schedules, starting times, agendas and board packets for upcoming meetings on these sites:

### Board of Supervisors Meetings

- ◆ The cyberagenda is available online the Thursday before Tuesday meeting date at: [www.marincounty.org/depts/bs/meeting-archive](http://www.marincounty.org/depts/bs/meeting-archive). The cyberagenda will also advise dates, times and agenda for **Marin Housing Authority** meetings.

### Marin Transit District Meetings

- ◆ See website for Marin Transit District agenda and to confirm meeting times: [www.marintransit.org](http://www.marintransit.org)

### Transportation Authority of Marin Meetings

- ◆ See website for TAM agenda and to confirm meeting times: [www.tam.ca.gov](http://www.tam.ca.gov)

### Marin LAFCO (Marin Local Agency Formation Commission)

- ◆ See website for LAFCO agenda and to confirm meeting times: [lafco.marin.org/index.php/commission-meetings](http://lafco.marin.org/index.php/commission-meetings)

### ABAG (Association of Bay Area Governments)

- ◆ See website for ABAG agenda and to confirm meeting times: [abag.ca.gov/meetings/](http://abag.ca.gov/meetings/)

Check out the Master Calendar on the County website:

<http://www.marincounty.org/main/calendar>

Also, check out our press releases and library of videos about County programs, services and initiatives:

<http://www.marincounty.org/main/newsroom>

# District 1 Newsletter

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### Online Addresses:

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/SupConnolly>

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Newsletter:

[https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAMARIN/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=CAMARIN\\_535](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAMARIN/subscriber/new?topic_id=CAMARIN_535)



Damon with some Marin County youth that have taken it upon themselves to get engaged in the issues of their community. Left to right: Robbie, Ben, Max, and our Summer Intern Christian Kuhn.



All County publications are available in alternative formats (Braille, Large Print, or CD), upon request. Requests for accommodations may be made by calling (415) 473-4381 (Voice) 473-3232 (TDD/TTY) or by e-mail at [disabilityaccess@marincounty.org](mailto:disabilityaccess@marincounty.org) at least four work days in advance of the event. Copies of documents are available in alternative formats, upon request.