

January, 2017

### Dear Friends,

I'm writing to provide an outlook on some key issues that lie ahead entering my third year in office as Marin County Supervisor representing District 1. For regular updates on how we are working for you, please like my official County Facebook page by clicking here: [www.facebook.com/SupConnolly](http://www.facebook.com/SupConnolly)



### Topics Addressed Below:

- The "Resilient Neighborhoods" Program
- Climate Action on the Local Level
- Transportation Issues in Marin
- Marinwood Plaza
- "The Oaks" Project
- Buck's Landing
- Upcoming Local Office Hours
- Medical Cannabis Meetings

## "Walking the Walk" with the Resilient Neighborhoods Program

### Leading on Climate Action at the Local, Community and Personal Levels

As we look ahead to 2017 and beyond, one of our top priorities as a County and one of my top priorities as District 1 Supervisor will be redoubling our commitment to implementing climate action solutions. In order to be successful in achieving our critical but ambitious carbon reduction goals, we will have to move the needle on multiple levels: with local government; with community resilience and organization; and with our own personal actions.

While 2017 will bring a new era of coordinated action in Marin on the county government level with a community-based Climate Action Plan implementation effort (more on that in the sections below), it is critical for all of us to be leaders on the levels of community action and personal decision making as well. In other words, we all need to **"walk the walk."**

**That is why I have convened a team of County employees to participate in the [Resilient Neighborhoods Program](#).** This community-based program provides participants with simple tools used to "audit" the carbon footprints of their households, and in turn gain a clear understanding of the steps that can be taken to reduce that footprint with concrete actions, habits and decisions. **The actions taken by our team will result in a reduction of nearly 100,000 pounds of annual carbon emissions.**



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## “Walking the Walk” with the Resilient Neighborhoods Program

### Our Personal Lives and Household Decisions Result in Large Carbon Footprints

Did you know that an estimated 60% of local carbon pollution comes from our household decisions? That means driving and transportation, choices around our home energy and water use, and the effects from our purchasing choices.

Meanwhile, as a county, we have committed to reducing our carbon emissions by 30% below 1990 levels by 2020 –one of the most ambitious reduction targets by a local jurisdiction in the State. The vast majority of the carbon emissions in Marin County are accounted for by private transportation practices, building energy (both residential and non-residential), and agricultural practices –but our habits as consumers bear out a serious impact as well. (To learn more about these numbers, check out the [Executive Summary of the County’s Climate Action Plan here.](#))

### The Resilient Neighborhoods Program

The Resilient Neighborhoods program convenes groups made up of communities of friends, neighbors and coworkers and provides clear tools and guidance that help participants do their part to address climate change by assessing the impacts of their own habits, and in turn taking simple steps to reduce carbon emissions.

The program consists of 5 “EcoTeam Meetings,” in which team members are initially led through the process of calculating their carbon footprints. From there, meetings cover a range of topics, including shopping, waste, water usage, transportation, home energy, and emergency preparedness. Each category contains a menu of actions that reduce household CO2 emissions, along with the means and resources needed to take and evaluate these actions, from providing low-flow showerheads and shower timers, tools for home energy assessments, and even the simple means to reduce junk mail.

By the end of the program, each household will have reduced at least 5,000 pounds of annual carbon emissions. Over 700 participants to date have shown that the behaviors adopted during the program stick, and that participants continue to take additional actions after graduating from the program. Even if you have already “done a lot,” I can assure that you will discover many new steps you can take to reduce your household impact.

### “Walking the Walk”

I have been taking many of these steps myself over the last few weeks in order to go above and beyond the goal of reducing 5,000 pounds of annual carbon emissions. I look forward to sharing these with you, along with steps taken by my fellow County team-members on my [facebook page, which you can follow by clicking here: <https://www.facebook.com/SupConnolly>](#).

As homage to the visionary architect of our County Civic Center, we have incorporated his name into our greater mission to come up with a creative team name: **“Frank Lloyd Wright the Planet!”**

If you want to learn more about the Resilient Neighborhoods Program, or explore creating your own team, visit their website or reach out to Outreach Associate Dara Rossoff Powell with questions:

**Website:** <http://www.resilientneighborhoods.org/>

**Contact:** Dara Rossoff Powell; [RNoutreachassociate@gmail.com](mailto:RNoutreachassociate@gmail.com), 415-485-5063 x. 7102



*Our team of County employees during one of 5 “EcoTeam Meetings”*

## Implementing The County's Climate Action Plan with Community Support

2017 has brought about a pivotal moment for climate action and saving our planet. There is rightfully much anxiety over the progress that stands to be undone by the new federal administration, and what the future holds.

The corollary to this anxiety is a new level of engagement among the general public –people beyond the typical spheres of environmental activists are voicing both their concerns, and stepping up their willingness to work towards progress in climate action.

This dynamic was on display on Dec. 19, 2016 when the San Rafael High School Gym was filled to capacity with members of the public who took the evening to hear from our Congressman, Jared Huffman, along with a panel of environmental defense attorneys and climate researchers.

Despite the circumstances, this was a heartening scene. Many longtime climate warriors in our community have been waiting for years to see this level of commitment and self-engagement among the public at large. It was also heartening to learn more about how well we are represented with our Congressman and other advocates working at the federal level.



*Over 800 people attended the Dec. climate action event*

But, as is the case with so many large political issues, the rubber meets the road on the local level, here at home.

In November 2015, Marin County adopted an updated **Climate Action Plan (CAP)**. The CAP is an ambitious plan that sets out the objectives, milestones, timeline and processes for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2020. As stated in the previous section, this makes for one of the most ambitious reduction targets by a local jurisdiction in the State.

The steps and strategies for achieving this goal have been divided into “municipal actions,” or actions taken by the county government in regard to our operations, and “community actions,” or actions to be taken by members of the public that the County is committed to promoting.

As with all plans, our CAP will only be as good as its implementation is effective. Effective implementation of the CAP will require new levels of coordination between the various county departments and agencies across Marin, but more than anything it will rely on **effective public engagement**. We have a community full of great ideas and a great capacity for organizing and taking action, and we must harness these advantages to be successful.

We also expect the public to hold us accountable for achieving our “municipal” goals. We look forward to using public meetings as an opportunity to report out on how the County is “walking the walk.” Regular public meetings have the potential to serve as a forum for convening public and private climate action efforts countywide, and for facilitating a free flow of information.

Our county staff is hard at work setting up the framework of these meetings. In the coming months, you will be hearing details and information about the first **Marin County Climate Action Plan Community Meeting**, and I want everyone who is concerned about climate issues and actions to attend.

It is excellent that people are engaged, but this new era of vigilance cannot just be about tracking news from DC. Taking action on the community and personal levels means taking a critical look at the work that we can all be doing together, along with evaluating your own carbon footprint.



*Supervisor Connolly addresses the crowd at Congressman Huffman's climate action event*

# Looking Ahead to Critical Transportation and Infrastructure Issues in Marin

As many of you already know, I was selected to serve as Marin County’s new representative on the Metropolitan Transportation Committee (MTC), the Bay Area’s regional transportation planning agency on Dec. 6, 2016. This is both a serious and timely appointment, as transportation and infrastructure issues will be demanding an even greater share of our focus and attention in Marin over the coming years. I am grateful to be well-positioned to dive deeper into many of these key issues.

## The Metropolitan Transportation Commission

From a broad perspective, I believe that the key challenge of representing Marin on a regional planning agency board is striking the important balance between advocating for the unique local interests of Marin in regional planning issues, while remaining strongly engaged in shaping regional policies, and advocating for regional transportation funding for Marin.

The key word to the approach described above is “balance.” While the people of Marin have benefitted greatly from a strong funding relationship with MTC over recent years, we also know that a one-size-fits-all approach to regional planning is not the most effective approach. As a county in which more than 80% of land is preserved, and the primary land uses are suburban-residential and agricultural, we are unique in the Bay Area. It is critical to ensure that local communities maintain control over their planning decisions, and I am dedicated to working constructively with all of our local communities and stakeholders towards these goals.

## A Range of Important Local Transportation Issues

Our transportation and infrastructure needs both in District 1 and across the County are very real, and there will not be a larger scale, more impactful planning effort in the years ahead than reworking the **Bettini Transit Center** in Downtown San Rafael. This is the hub for our local public transportation systems, now including SMART. These systems and their effective integration affect traffic locally and county-wide. Moreover, there are several moving pieces related to planning in this area, including the timing of the ultimate extension of SMART to Larkspur.



*Bettini Transit Center in Downtown San Rafael*

The traffic situation in this area of Downtown San Rafael is already a problem, so I see it as a ‘glass half-full’ that we now have the chance to address these issues from a systemic, large-scale perspective. As a board member for Marin Transit (operator of local bus and transit services), the Transportation Authority of Marin (Marin County’s transportation planning agency), and MTC (the Bay Area regional planning board that holds opportunities for funding), I feel as though I am well-positioned to work towards solutions that alleviate traffic, improve safety, create functionality for all transit systems, and provide a true “gateway” to Downtown San Rafael.

Among the other key issues for the County is the completion of improvements to Interstate 580 and the third lane on the **Richmond-San Rafael Bridge**. Although preparation work is in progress for opening the third lane eastbound, there are other issues creating significant impacts on traffic on Sir Francis Drake and throughout Larkspur and Central Marin, including the approaches to the bridge.



*The Richmond-San Rafael Bridge*

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# Looking Ahead to Critical Transportation and Infrastructure Issues in Marin

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We also must work to see the **North South Greenway**, or SMART’s Multiuse Path, through to completion. It is critical that we create circulation and connectivity to surrounding infrastructure in station design and integration, particularly with "first and last mile" local transit options. The greenway is an important piece of this equation.

**Safe Routes to School** will remain a key issue for me throughout District 1 and the County. Pickup and drop off times affect local traffic. I am collaborating with Marin Transit, our local school leaders and communities, and community advocacy groups to make sure that all available means of providing safe routes for our kids to school are worked out and explored, with a focus on solutions that take cars off the road.

As a transit user myself, I have worked in the past to raise awareness and encourage our communities to take advantage of our systems and participate in their improvement. I will continue to work to make sure that Marin residents have access to transportation that is convenient and dependable, and make sure that infrastructure improvements are planned to integrate appropriately with the surrounding environment and to promote multi-modal transportation.

## An Update on Marinwood Plaza

After many months of planning and delays, we are now in a period of active cleanup. Plaza owners remain obligated to a deadline of February 1, 2017 set by the San Francisco Bay Regional Quality Control Board for successful completion of the excavation of contaminated soil. With excavation currently in progress, we will find out soon if that deadline will be met. On November 23, 2016, I sent a letter to the Regional Water Board expressing my concerns in regard to this deadline being met, and asking that full penalties be enforced if the deadline is missed.

It is frustrating that the combined effects of a long-vacant, dilapidated shopping center (save for a stellar market) have combined with intensified parking uses by oversized vehicles along Marinwood Avenue to have a negative effect on community character. We have been at work on solutions for the parking issue, and are currently moving forward with steps to ban overnight parking for all vehicles except cars, motorcycles and pickups. I will be engaging with Plaza owners and examining all available options of cleaning up the Plaza in the near term. The neighborhood should not have to face unnecessary distress due to the work at hand, nor the extended vacancy.

I have been posting updates as they become available on my County Supervisor Facebook page, and sending newsflashes to my email list that is specifically designated to Marinwood Plaza. The links below will provide those materials, and the means to stay informed.

- [Click here to sign up for future updates on Marinwood Plaza](#)
- [To view all Marinwood Plaza newsflashes to date, click here](#)
- [Click here to like Supervisor Connolly’s Facebook Page](#)



*Excavated soil behind property before disposal*



*Plaza Owners are required to excavate to a depth of 15'*

## The Oaks Proposal

An application was submitted on Dec. 22, 2016, for a senior living facility known in the past as “Oakview,” or more recently “The Oaks.” Before being evaluated, an application must be deemed “complete” by County planning staff, meaning that it must be confirmed to include all the information that will be needed for a full evaluation. On Jan. 20, 2017, a letter was sent to the applicant indicating that the application submitted was “incomplete,” and detailing further information that would be required for evaluation. When more information is available and in the event that the process proceeds, we will create a plan to actively engage the public and ensure that local residents are part of the process.

- [Click here for the “letter of incompleteness” sent by CDA on Jan. 20, 2017](#)
- [Click here for the complete project page with all relevant docs from CDA](#)

## Buck’s Landing

On December 13, 2016 the Board of Supervisors approved the County’s agreement to purchase what is commonly known as Buck’s Landing. This has long been a very special location for the community, and one that many have wanted to see preserved and protected from development. This action preserves a gateway to Gallinas Creek, ties into the SF Bay Water Trail and ensures that the public can enjoy the wetland and tidal marsh habitats for generations to come. Adding property like this to the public domain contributes to healthy, rich communities. We’re reminded by this opportunity about the power of nature to nourish the human spirit.

- [Click here to read a Marin IJ Story on Buck’s Landing](#)

## Upcoming Local Office Hours: Saturday, Mar. 4, 10AM at Aroma Café

I continue to host an ongoing series of “Local Office Hours” throughout the district on the weekends and evenings, providing an opportunity for people who might not otherwise have the time to meet and discuss county or neighborhood issues, or connect with me regarding anything on their mind. Our next office hours will be on Saturday, March 4, from 10AM to noon at Aroma Café in Downtown San Rafael. I hope to see you there!

## Upcoming Public Meetings to Review Medical Cannabis Dispensary Applications

Marin County received 10 Medical Cannabis Dispensary License Applications for up to four available licenses that may be granted by the Office of the County Administrator. Three public meetings are scheduled for the advisory committee that has been appointed by the County Administrator to solicit public input on the applications and to submit its advisory recommendation to the County Administrator on the merits of each application. Applicants will present their proposals to the advisory committee and community, and the public will have the opportunity to comment. No decisions will be made at the meetings. Comments for the advisory committee may also be submitted electronically to [ilundegaard@marincounty.org](mailto:ilundegaard@marincounty.org) or in writing addressed to the Medical Cannabis Dispensary Advisory Committee, c/o: Inge Lundegaard at 3501 Civic Center Drive Suite 308, San Rafael CA 94903.

The only application in District 1 will be reviewed at the meeting below. For information on the rest of the meetings scheduled, visit the website provided below.

- **2/16/17, 6pm, Civic Center Board Chambers (Rm 330), 3501 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael**

Medical Cannabis Program information and Dispensary Applications currently under review are available online at [www.marincounty.org/cannabis](http://www.marincounty.org/cannabis). We strongly recommend that you subscribe to this website to receive automated updates. If you have questions regarding the public meeting, applications or the Medical Cannabis Program, please contact Inge Lundegaard, Planner at 415-473-7023 or [ilundegaard@marincounty.org](mailto:ilundegaard@marincounty.org).



*Buck’s Landing could provide new recreational opportunities in the Gallinas Watershed*

**Damon Connolly**

Supervisor, First District  
Marin County Board of Supervisors  
(415) 473-7331  
dconnolly@marincounty.org  
[www.marincounty.org/district1](http://www.marincounty.org/district1)

**Aides:**

**Chris Callaway**

(415) 473-7354  
ccallaway@marincounty.org

**Susannah Clark**

(415) 473-7342  
sclark@marincounty.org

**Location and Mailing Address:**

Marin County Civic Center  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 329  
San Rafael, CA 94903

**Online Addresses:**

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

Twitter:  
[https://twitter.com/damon\\_connolly](https://twitter.com/damon_connolly)

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)



*On January 3, Dennis Rodoni was sworn in as the new Marin County Supervisor Representing District 4*



*A "double rainbow" over District 1 following a recent winter storm*



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