



May 7, 2019

MARIN COUNTY  
PARKS  
PRESERVATION RECREATION



OPEN SPACE DISTRICT  
REGIONAL PARKS & PATHWAYS  
COMMUNITY PARKS  
LANDSCAPE SERVICES

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Board of Supervisors  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94903

**SUBJECT: RECEIVE PRESENTATION REGARDING OUTCOMES OF THE 2019  
MARIN COUNTY PARKS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY  
AND REQUEST TO EXPLORE A REDUCTION IN PARKS GATE  
ENTRY AND POOL FEES**

Dear Board Members:

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Receive a presentation on public engagement outcomes.
2. Direct staff to explore a reduction in gate entry and pool fees.
3. Direct staff to take the necessary steps to extend the existing parks, open space, and farmland Measure A sales tax on the November 2020 ballot.

**BACKGROUND:**

Marin County Parks' Strategic Plan was finalized in 2008, and in 2013 began receiving funding from the Measure A sales tax supporting parks, open space, and farmland. In early 2019 Marin County Parks worked with BMWL to conduct a community engagement and outreach effort intended to check in with Marin residents about department work and priorities. The twofold purpose of this effort was to raise awareness about Marin County Parks' budgets, work, programs, and resources for the community; and to invite Marin residents to provide feedback on department spending, visitor experiences, and quality of and awareness about department work. This work complements the visitor study conducted in 2016 and 2017 which focused on visitor experiences and perspectives in parks and open space preserves.

The department utilized existing communication channels and a network of over 160 partner organizations to engage residents in all areas of the county. Marin County Parks contacted partners directly, asking them to utilize social media packets and encourage their networks to become more familiar with and provide feedback to Marin County Parks. Marin County Parks' staff increased awareness and participation through social media, press releases, email marketing, website, signs and notices in parks, an insert and Marin Voice in the Marin IJ, in-person intercepts, and a news interview on KRON4. The effort was launched February 11, 2019 and remained active for six weeks.

## **OVERVIEW OF RESULTS:**

Facebook ads reached 15,167 people and Marin IJ ads generated 178,360 impressions. The department received 13,308 total unique website visitors. Four thousand eight hundred (4,800) residents took the survey, representing all zip codes in Marin. Residents ages 60 years and older were the most common survey takers followed by ages 50-60. Sixty-two (62) surveys were completed in Spanish.

Survey responses indicated Marin County Parks and its work is well known and has a high approval rating among Marin residents. Sixty-five percent of survey takers visit county parks or open spaces on a daily or weekly basis. For residents, the park experience begins with *marincountyparks.org* where residents are most likely to look for information regarding parks, open space preserves, and projects therein.

Forty-seven percent of those surveyed are aware of recent Marin County Parks projects. Survey takers indicated the highest priority budget categories are vegetation management and wildland fire fuels reduction followed by trail maintenance and park facilities maintenance and improvement. Over half of survey takers want to see increased funding for vegetation management and wildland fire fuels reduction. Over 90 percent of survey takers wanted to see sustained or increased funding for vegetation management and wildland fire fuels reduction, parks facilities maintenance and improvement, and trail maintenance and improvement; while over 75 percent support sustained or increased funding for all other budget categories. Forty-two percent of survey takers don't experience a barrier to parks. However, the cost of entrance fees was reported as the leading single barrier to park use.

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

Overall, residents approve of the job Marin County Parks is doing. They are aware of projects in the parks and know where to look for information. This public engagement process reached residents across the county, achieving Marin County Parks' goal of connecting with residents beyond its usual stakeholders. Survey results have already begun to inform the Marin County Parks budget development process. The survey and other factors informed the decision to hire a 14-person fire crew to perform vegetation management work over the next two years. The survey found that park entrance fees are the greatest single barrier to enjoying Marin County's parks. For this reason, staff is requesting direction to pursue the necessary steps to reduce parking fees and the McNear's Beach swimming pool entrance fee.

Following several years of Measure A project implementation, this survey also tested how valuable Marin County Parks' program areas and investments are for Marin residents. Survey results showed Marin residents see these program areas as priorities and support sustaining or increasing financial support, especially for vegetation management and wildfire fuels reduction, trail maintenance and improvement, and park facility maintenance and improvements. These results reflect the strong level of community engagement Marin County Parks experiences when planning and implementing projects, including the community in volunteer stewardship and science activities, or interacting with residents while performing routine maintenance. For this reason, staff is also requesting direction from your board to pursue the necessary steps to bring an ordinance back to your board placing a measure to extend the existing parks, open space, and farmland Measure A sales tax on the November 2020 ballot.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Approval of the recommended actions will have no fiscal impact. Future related actions brought to your board may have a fiscal impact that will be considered at that time.

**REVIEWED BY:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Dept. of Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> County Counsel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County Administrator	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Chamberlain  
Assistant Director