



MARIN COUNTY
PARKS
PRESERVATION RECREATION



OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
REGIONAL PARKS & PATHWAYS
COMMUNITY PARKS
LANDSCAPE SERVICES

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December 14, 2021

Honorable Board of Supervisors
Marin County Civic Center
San Rafael, CA 94903

SUBJECT: Presentation on Proposed Draft Parks, Open Space, and Farmland Transactions and Use Tax Re-Implementation Expenditure Plan

Dear Supervisors:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Receive presentation from Parks staff
2. Direct staff to bring proposed ordinance and expenditure plan to the Parks and Open Space Commission on January 20, 2022 and to the board in early 2022 to place the measure on the June 7, 2022 ballot.

SUMMARY: In 2012 voters in Marin approved a one-quarter cent (1/4) retail transactions and use tax measure, Measure A (Ordinance 3586), to fund conservation and protection of biodiversity, wildland fire fuel reduction and vegetation management, sea level rise adaptation, farmland preservation, deferred maintenance in parks, road and trail improvements in open space preserves, and projects that protect the natural beauty of Marin. The existing measure has raised roughly \$14 million annually, resulting in a significant list of stewardship and maintenance projects as well as enhanced services within the County's parks and preserves. A project list, robust annual reporting, and clean audits dating back to 2013 may be viewed at <https://www.parks.marincounty.org/about-us/measure-a>. Uses of Measure A funding are governed by an ordinance and expenditure plan approved by voters in 2012. The existing measure has a sunset date of March 31, 2022.

80% Support for a Potential Extension of Measure A

At the July 6, 2021 special meeting of the Board of Supervisors, your Board received a presentation on a poll conducted at the direction of the Marin Open Space Trust (MOST), gauging community interest in extending the sales tax measure that found over 80% support for extending the measure. At that meeting your Board directed staff to seek placement of a measure continuing the Parks Measure A sales tax on the June 7, 2022 election ballot.

Community Engagement

Prior to placing the measure on the ballot, Parks staff invited community members to share their feedback related to Measure A to inform any potential changes to the expenditure plan or ordinance through a community survey and office hours meetings. Over 2600 survey responses were received and staff hosted 45 office hour meetings with individual and community groups. Parks staff presented the results of this engagement to your board on October 19th and utilized those results as well as the additional engagement received through the board meeting and

commission meetings to inform the proposed draft changes presented today. Summaries of community survey results and office hours notes are included with this board letter as Attachments A and B.

Proposed Draft Changes

While the existing Expenditure Plan continues to meet community priorities in general, a few changes are proposed to address public feedback. The proposed draft changes were released on Friday, November 12th, and presented to the Parks and Open Space Commission on Thursday, November 18th. Many comments regarding the proposed changes were received as a part of that commission meeting. Additionally, many community members made comments through our website (Attachment C). Based on public input, several potential changes are being proposed:

Increased Focus on Wildfire Prevention in County Parks and Open Space

Staff recommends increasing the allocation for County Park and Open Space from 65% to 75% to create an allocation of 30% focused on wildfire prevention on County Park and Open Space Lands. Wildfire prevention was the top area of interest in Parks' survey results and was brought up by many that staff met with as a top priority. Wildland fire prevention efforts and vegetation management have increased as a priority over the last several years as climate change has led to unprecedented fire seasons across the state. While there isn't currently a specific allocation for fuel reduction, Parks has spent around \$2 Million per year over the last several years on this area of work. The focus of this work, and the likely focus of increased funding would be to improve the defensible space maintenance along the border of neighboring communities.

Change in Approach for Farmland Program

Staff recommends reducing the farmland program from 20% to 10% of the overall measure. This responds to a common theme in many of the survey responses that was also echoed among several of the 45 groups we met with and again in the comments to the proposed changes regarding concern that funding agricultural easements was not as high of a priority as it had been in the past. Several of the groups and individuals we met with also suggested that this program diversify funded stewardship activities to include more stewardship activities like carbon farming, riparian restoration, and community gardens. Additionally, staff recommends increasing the Resource Conservation District funding to 10% of the farmland program to keep it at the same overall percentage and remove the restriction that these funds only be utilized on easement protected parcels. All projects funded by the measure would include a land tenure agreement to ensure that improvements funded by the measure are kept and maintained.

Changes to Land Preservation Program

Staff recommends reducing this allocation from 20% of 65% to 10% of 75%. This fund currently has a balance of \$8.5 Million and while a few key properties remain community priorities, a reduced allocation would likely still be enough to be able to protect these properties if the opportunity arises. Additionally, staff recommend making these funds available for capital improvements to properties acquired under this program.

The original Measure A Ordinance 3586 Expenditure Plan and the draft revised expenditure plan for the re-implementation of the existing measure are included with

this board letter as Attachments D and E, the draft updated expenditure plan language related to the potential changes above begins in Section B on page 7 of Attachment E.

Next Steps

At your board’s direction, staff will return to the Parks and Open Space Commission in January 2022 for a formal recommendation to your Board. Then, on January 25th, 2022, staff will return to your Board for an initial hearing and then again on February 1st for a final hearing and seeking passage of a resolution placing the updated ordinance and expenditure plan on the June 7, 2022 ballot to re-implement this parks, open space, and farmland revenue source.

Today’s presentation is included with this board letter as Attachment F.

EQUITY IMPACT: Re-Implementing Measure A would enable Marin County Parks to continue a number of equity focused park programs including:

- Fee Reductions: Park fees were reduced and, in some cases, eliminated because of the funding made available by the measure.
- Library Park Pass: Park passes are made available for check out at Marin Libraries to reduce barriers to low-income residents.
- Breath/Respira Grant Program: Over the last 9 years, Measure A has funded between \$100,000 and \$200,000 in grants to community organizations to provide transportation and programing for individuals who might otherwise not have opportunities to visit parks.
- Maintenance partnership supporting George “Rocky” Graham Park in Marin City.
- Accessibility upgrades to scenic natural areas through the Inclusive Access Plan and maintenance and upgrades to Marin’s most heavily used and diverse local and regional park facilities.
- Strategic partnerships with Marin’s low-income communities and communities of color to expand and improve park access through programs, workforce development, and capital investment.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact related to today’s presentation.

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or concerns.

REVIEWED BY:

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

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Chamberlain
Assistant Director

- ATTACHMENTS:**
- A. Community Survey Results
 - B. Office Hour Notes
 - C. Comments Received on Draft Expenditure Plan Changes
 - D. Original Measure A Ordinance 3586 Expenditure Plan
 - E. Draft Expenditure Plan proposed for reimplementation
 - F. Copy of today's Presentation