



MARIN COUNTY
PARKS
PRESERVATION • RECREATION



- OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
- REGIONAL PARKS & PATHWAYS
- COMMUNITY PARKS
- LANDSCAPE SERVICES

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February 15, 2022

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

**SUBJECT: PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
TRANSACTIONS AND USE TAX RE-IMPLEMENTATION
ORDINANCE AND EXPENDITURE PLAN FINAL APPEARANCE**

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Adopt Marin Parks, Open Space, and Sustainable Agriculture Transactions and Use Tax Ordinance.
2. Adopt resolution calling for an election to submit the above ordinance for approval by the voters in Marin County that re-implements and collects a one-quarter of one percent transactions and use tax for a nine-year period for the purpose of sustaining essential funding to preserve and maintain parks, open space, and sustainable agriculture.

SUMMARY: At the direction of your Board, Parks staff has been working to place an ordinance to reimplement the Parks Measure A one-quarter cent sales tax on the upcoming general election ballot to be held on June 7, 2022. Most recently, staff introduced the proposed ordinance to your Board and the public at the February 8, 2022 meeting. After hearing public testimony, your Board requested staff schedule consideration of adoption of the ordinance, which is the purpose of this item today.

DISCUSSION: 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 completed 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 are available on the Parks [Measure A webpage](#). Uses of Measure A funding are governed by Ordinance 3586 and its associated expenditure plan. The existing measure has a sunset date of March 31, 2022. This action would be the second of a two-step process to adopt the ordinance and expenditure plan and place a measure on the June 7, 2022 primary ballot re-implementing this parks, open space, and agriculture funding source.

80% Support for a Potential Extension of Measure A

At the July 6, 2021 special meeting of the Board of Supervisors, staff presented the results of 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 the Board of Supervisors directed staff to seek placement of a measure re-implementing 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 and ordinance through a community survey and office hours meetings. Over 2,700 survey responses were received, and staff hosted 45 office hour meetings with individuals and community groups. Parks staff presented the results of the survey and office hours to your commission and the Board of Supervisors and utilized this feedback to inform proposed draft changes to the expenditure plan. The proposed draft changes were released on Friday, November 12, and presented to the Parks and Open Space Commission on Thursday, November 18. Many comments regarding the proposed changes were received as a part of that commission meeting and through our Department's website. The draft proposed changes as well as website comments from the community were presented to the Board of Supervisors on December 14. At that meeting your Board provided staff further input and direction that was incorporated into a proposal that was subsequently presented to the Parks and Open Space Commission at a meeting held on January 20, 2022. After hearing further community feedback and deliberating, the Commission has recommended your board adopt the ordinance and expenditure plan as attached which incorporates a few additional changes.

Proposed Ordinance and Expenditure Plan

The following highlights some of the key components and changes in the proposed plan:

Support for County Parks and Open Space and An Increased Focus on Wildfire Prevention

Throughout the process of getting community feedback, staff heard how valuable park and open space lands and facilities are to the community and how important the Measure A maintenance and improvements to these facilities is. Staff also heard interest in wildland fire risk reduction and fuels work in the wildland urban interface area of county parks and preserves as a top priority for the community. Staff recommends continuing to allocate 65% of Measure A funds to County Parks and Open Space for the maintenance and improvement of park and open space facilities and preservation of natural lands and ecosystems. Additionally, staff recommends increasing the investment in fire prevention by creating a new allocation within the Parks and Open Space portion of the measure that ensures 25% of those funds are used for direct services to reduce fuels on County Park and Open Space Lands. Staff also recommends reducing the acquisition allocation from 20% to 10% of the County Parks and Open Space Program. This fund currently has a balance of \$8.5 million and while some key properties remain community priorities, a reduced allocation would likely still be enough to protect these properties if the opportunity arises. Finally, staff recommends making these funds available for site improvements, like erosion control, trail improvements or other necessary work on

properties acquired under this program to help make them accessible to the public or to mitigate any hazardous situations.

Change in Approach for Sustainable Agriculture

Staff recommends keeping funding of the farmland program at 20% but broadening the scope to fund community gardens, natural resource protection, carbon sequestration on working lands, wetland restoration on farmland as well as agricultural easement acquisition. Based on discussion at the February 8, 2022 meeting the recommended expenditure plan sets the easement funding at 50% of the total allocation for the sustainable agriculture program. Additionally, staff recommends increasing the Resource Conservation District funding to 20% of the sustainable agriculture program and allocating the remaining 30% of the Sustainable Agriculture Program to fund competitive matching grants to qualified organizations to support work on sustainable food systems, climate beneficial management, and improving natural resource values on Marin’s working lands.

Next Steps

If your board adopts the ordinance, expenditure plan and resolution presented today, staff will send those documents to the elections office to place the measure on the June 2022 ballot.

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 programming 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: The Marin County Elections Department estimates the incremental cost of placing this measure on the ballot will be \$60,000. Marin County Parks staff will work with the County Administrator’s Office to account for the costs pending the result of the election. This measure, if passed, is expected to generate roughly \$16,000,000 per year over the nine-year term for park, open space, and sustainable agriculture uses.

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

REVIEWED BY: County Administrator N/A
 Department of Finance N/A
 County Counsel N/A
 Human Resources N/A

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Chamberlain
Assistant Director

ATTACHMENTS: A. Ordinance and Expenditure Plan
 B. Resolution