



Marin County Board of Supervisors District 2 Newsletter: May 2012

Dear Friends and Marin County District 2 Residents:

Here's an update of selected news items from recent Board of Supervisors (BOS) meetings, upcoming events/dates, and a smattering of County and District 2 infrastructure improvements that might be of interest to you. This newsletter is a work in progress; I'm interested in hearing from you about what and how much information is useful. You can always reach my office at 415-473-7331, or e-mail me, krice@marincounty.org to provide feedback and let me know what you think.

NEWS ITEMS

Governor's May Budget Revision

The news from the State is very grave, indeed, with a new estimate of a two-year budget gap of \$15.7 billion, up from a \$9.2 billion gap as estimated in January. The "solutions" to close this gap include very deep cuts in safety net services and many other programs. Without passage of the proposed state tax increase in November 2012 or significantly higher than anticipated revenues, draconian cuts will be made to public education systems from kindergarten through college, early childhood education and child care, public safety, parks and flood control. For more detailed information, see this report issued by the California Budget Project: http://www.cbp.org/pdfs/2012/120514_May_Revise.pdf.

I will provide more information on how these proposed cuts will affect County programs and all communities as the Governor's proposal is analyzed.

Consideration of Dedicated Parks, Open Space and Agricultural Land Preservation Funding

At our May 15th meeting, with a wide variety of community-based organization support, the BOS approved moving forward with a community survey regarding a 1/8 to 1/4% sales tax to provide dedicated funding for parks, open space and agricultural land preservation. Given the limited resources presently available for maintenance and enforcement of existing open space and parks, and increasing pressure for land development, establishing dedicated funding is critical. The survey will determine whether the community is willing to support such a tax; if support appears evident, the next step will be to develop an expenditure plan and then to place a tax measure on the November 12, 2012 ballot for a public vote.

Marin County Aging Plan: 2012-2016

Marin County's older adult population is increasing at a rate that far surpasses the national rate for this population. In the past decade, while our general county population increased only by 2%, our population of residents aged 60 years and above increased by 38% from the previous decade! Close to 1 out of every 4 residents in the county today is 60 or over. Marin's median age is the oldest in the Bay Area. While aging in one's home and community is an aspiration many of us share, enabling this goal requires focused community attention, particularly with shrinking safety net services, service

cost increases, transportation and housing challenges, and decreased federal and state funding for in-home service workers and senior support programs.

A recent report by the Area Agencies on Aging, under the auspices of the County Department of Health and Human Services, outlines relevant information and assessed needs and will help us make informed decisions about service priorities and goals for the next four years. To view this report: http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/HH/main/ag/PDFs/AreaPlan2012_16.pdf.

Update on the Ross Valley Sanitary District Rate (RVSD) Increase and Bond Issuance

At last week's meeting, the RVSD failed to secure necessary Directors' votes to move forward with a rate structure change that would likely have resulted in significant rate increases. Approval would have required 4 out of 5 "yes" votes; the final vote was 3:2. It is yet to be seen whether or not the RVSD will move forward with issuance of \$100 million in bonds despite lack of consensus among its Directors.

There is no doubt in my mind that repairs to fix broken and aging pipes are necessary - and that they will require a mix of financing, including bonds and rate increases. But I believe that greater transparency and community confidence are critical before embarking on such major and costly infrastructure improvements.

Library Reservation Fees Eliminated and Fines Reduced

The Marin County Library eliminated the 50-cent fee it charges to reserve library materials. This change brings the Marin County Free Library's fee schedule in line with the other libraries throughout Marin County that make up the consortium known as MARINet. A recent study found that although this change could result in the loss of up to \$41,000 in annual revenues, it will be fully off-set by savings in staff otherwise expended posting and collecting the fees.

Pension Reform Update

Anyone concerned about the fiscal health of Marin County - and every elected official - must continue to focus on the issue of unfunded pension and retiree health care obligations and actively attend to reform of what is clearly an unsustainable situation. This is an important and complex issue. For those of you interested in more in-depth education, I urge you to review the Little Hoover Commission report on public pensions, which can be accessed [here](#). In addition, the County has established a Marin County Pensions Information webpage to better understand County-specific information about the cost of public employee pensions and our reform efforts aimed at making them more sustainable over time: <http://www.marincounty.org/Home/Main/Pensions>.

I understand the deep frustration many taxpayers feel regarding the current system, particularly when they confront their own diminished retirement hopes. That said, California law, as upheld through State Supreme Court decision- protects vested rights, meaning that we cannot take back from employees/retirees what has been promised historically. Going forward, we need a future workforce that is economically viable and invested in the success of the County. With our hands tied per the past, what we can do is move forward to create a system that is fair, sustainable and developed through the active participation of all stakeholder groups, - the public, labor groups, and management. While we need to continue to make progress, I am proud of the significant steps that the BOS has taken already to tackle the problem, including:

- Being the only public agency in Marin, and the only County, to endorse the Governor's 12-point plan to reform pensions;
- Negotiating lower cost pension tiers with a number of our employee groups and continuing to do so with others;
- Reducing the risk of “spiking” by enacting a formula of 3-year averaging upon which pension benefits are based;
- Creating an OPEB trust for fiscal year 2012-13 that will reduce the long-term liabilities for employee health costs, saving over \$215 million over the next 17 years (and I am personally advocating for additional contributions to this trust with available one-time funds to accelerate debt reduction); and
- Directing staff to move forward with the development of a local hybrid option.

Going forward, I will be advocating exploring options that address:

- “Double dipping,” whereby individuals simultaneously obtain post-retirement employment and, at the same time, collect pension payments;
- Establishment of a cap on pension/retirement benefit to either a percentage or fixed dollar amount; and
- Alignment of retirement age with social security retirement age for non-safety employees.

Learn About Citizen Participation at Marin County BOS Meetings

We welcome citizen participation in public meetings, but sometimes lack of experience can be intimidating for newcomers. To help address this, our public information team developed a video to help the public understand the format of BOS meetings and how to participate. Click [here](#) to view "Participating at a BOS Meeting" for a brief orientation.

Foreclosure and Loan Modification Information

Fair Housing of Marin (615 B Street, San Rafael, CA 94901) can help residents who are behind on their mortgage payments, at risk for default or foreclosure, or who want to learn about loan modifications and other options from our HUD-Certified Counselor. Spanish-speaking counselors are available, and services are offered free of charge. For more information, contact: Stefanie Taylor, Foreclosure Prevention Intake Specialist, 457-5025 x111 stefanie@fairhousingmarin.com.

CALENDAR ITEMS

May 16-May 24 and June 25-July 2: Provide Input on Marin's 10 Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

Please consider joining an interactive community planning process that will streamline updating of the 10 year community plan to address homelessness. A series of community meetings are being held this week and next with follow-up next month. The current plan and information about the updating process is available at <http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/HH/main/coc/10yearplan.cfm>. For more information, contact Lisa Sepahi M.S.W., Homelessness Analyst, County of Marin Health & Human Services at (415) 473-3501 or lsepahi@marincounty.org.

There is a meeting in Kentfield this week (Friday, May 18, 2012, 6 – 7:30 pm at College of Marin, 835 College Avenue, Fusselman Hall, Room 120) -- and in neighboring communities next week ; you are welcome to attend any community meetings: for schedule click [here](#). The schedule of June meetings (all held at the Health & Wellness Campus, 3240 Kerner, San Rafael) at which specific recommendations will be developed, is posted [here](#).

May 19, 9:30 am - 1:30 pm: 680 Trail Grand Opening

Come celebrate the grand opening of the 680 Trail, a shared-use trail providing a vital link between the Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow Divide and the Loma Alta Open Space Preserves. Construction on the trail reflected a remarkable partnership effort of County Parks staff, Conservation Corps North Bay, contractors, biologist consultants, and nearly 150 volunteers who donated 700 volunteer hours.

The grand opening celebration will take place at the eastern trailhead - the intersection of the 680 trail and the Luiz Ranch fire road on the Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow (TL/SH) Open Space Preserve. The trailhead is about 1 mile above the preserve entries of the following streets in Terra Linda: Del Ganado Road, De La Guerra Road, Vallejo Way, and Diego Drive and from Lucas Valley Road at Mt. Muir Court. The trailhead can also be accessed by traveling east from the top of the Loma Alta Open Space Preserve (with access points in Fairfax at Glen Drive, near White's Hill at Brown Bridge or from Lucas Valley Road at the Big Rock trailhead).

RSVP required: call 473-6387. Click [here](#) for more information info and a link to a map. Looking forward to seeing you on this great addition to our open space!

ROADS, ROADS, ROADS

The Department of Public Works (DPW) Roads Division has primary responsibility for maintaining roads in *unincorporated* areas of Marin. Exceptions are state roads, city streets, or non-county maintained roads. The county is divided into two areas: west Marin (questions/concerns should be directed to the Nicasio Yard at 446-4421) and urban eastern Marin (questions/complaints should be directed to the Civic Center Yard at 473-7388).

We are currently playing catch-up with almost 30 years of deferred maintenance. We have a lot of road work to do throughout the County. With use of dedicated funds, DPW is working to complete a five year work plan in three years. Sometimes residents wonder how prioritization of maintenance and repairs occurs. In a nutshell: The most heavily traveled streets and local thoroughfares receive first priority. Smaller neighborhood streets may receive a higher priority if they are in exceptionally poor condition. In addition, roads are selected for resurfacing based on geographic equity. Lastly, road improvements are funded through a variety of local, state and federal funds, some of which can only be used on more heavily traveled streets.

Barring weather or other disruptions, between the months of June and November 2012, the following roads in District 2 neighborhoods will be paved or seal-coated by DPW:

Greenbrae/Kentfield projects: *Corte Lodato, Hotaling Ct., North Almenar, Laurel Grove, Rosebank Avenue & Lane*

Fairfax: *Mariele Dr., Gregory, Laura, Von, Gary, Manor View, Olema*

Sleepy Hollow: *Deer Hollow, Estates, Sulpher Spa, Tarry, Katrina, Catskill, Oakcrest (Deer Hollow to*

Alameda)

WEST MARIN: Sir Francis Drake Update

Repair and resurfacing a 5.2 mile section of Sir Francis Drake Blvd. through Samuel P. Taylor Park is scheduled to begin this summer. For more information about the project, visit the link here:

http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/PW/main/pdfs/sfdb/SFD_press_release_may_2012.pdf

Please let me know if there are other issues or types of issues you would like to see included in future e-blasts and let me know what's on your mind: 415-473-7331 or e-mail me, krice@marincounty.org.

Sincerely,



Contact Information

Mailing Address: 3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 329, San Rafael, CA 94903

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Requests for meeting accommodations may be made by calling 473-4381 (Voice) 473-3232 (TDD/TTY) or by e-mail at disabilityaccess@marincounty.org at least four work days in advance of the event. Copies of documents are available in alternative formats, upon request.

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