

April 5, 2023 Fairfax Town Council Meeting

Supplement to Agenda Item#3
Councilmembers' assignments, committees, and activities in March

This report of Mayor Cutrano's activities in March 2023 was submitted after publication of the Council packet.

Mayor Cutrano

- 3/1—Attended the Marin Sanitary Service 75th Anniversary and Ribbon Cutting event
- 3/1—Special Meeting of the Fairfax Town Council.
- 3/1—Regular Meeting of the Fairfax Town Council.
- 3/8—Ross Valley Fire Board Regular March Meeting. [Access the agenda packet here.](#)
- 3/13—Transportation Authority of Marin Administration, Projects, & Planning Executive Committee Meeting. [Access the agenda packet here.](#)
- 3/14—Housing Element Subcommittee Meeting with Vice Mayor Coler, Town Manager Abrams, Contract Planner Daniel Hortert, and Andrew Hill from Dyette and Bhatia.
- 3/17—Closed Session of the Fairfax Town Council.
- 3/17—2023 Annual Retreat of the Fairfax Town Council.
- 3/18—Memorial Park Ribbon-cutting event in San Anselmo.
- 3/20—Marin Center for Food & Agriculture Farmers & Stakeholder Update call
- 3/20—Meeting regarding State Route 37 with Congressman Jared Huffman, Supervisor Eric Lucan, and Councilmember Brian Colbert.
- 3/21—April Agenda Setting Meeting with Vice Mayor Coler and Town Manager Abrams
- 3/21—Ross Valley School Bus Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement (JEPA) Meeting.
- 3/22—Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) Regular March Meeting. [Access the agenda packet here.](#)
- 3/22—Marin County Council of Mayors and Councilmembers (MCCMC) March meeting. [Access the agenda packet here.](#)
- 3/22—Marin Conservation League: "After Hours" CEQA Forum with Rachel Hooper
- 3/23—Call with Mark Van Gorder at PG&E regarding the development of an outage report for the Town of Fairfax to understand annual and seasonal trends in power outage cause and duration.
- 3/23—Transportation Authority of Marin regular March meeting. [Access the agenda packet here.](#)
- 3/27—Meeting with the Fairfax Chamber of Commerce
- 3/28—Housing Element Subcommittee Meeting with Vice Mayor Coler, Town Manager Abrams, Contract Planner Daniel Hortert, and Andrew Hill from Dyette and Bhatia.
- 3/28—Fairfax Open Space Committee meeting
- 3/29—Meeting with Dr. Rob Eyler with the Marin Economic Forum regarding unemployment data and trends in Fairfax.
- 3/31/23—Meeting with Supervisor Lucan regarding SMART and State Route 37 integration planning.
- 3/31/23—Meeting with Supervisor Rice regarding the Fairfax Housing Element timeline, acquisition of Upper Hawthorne Canyon and discussions regarding the Wall Property, the upcoming Just Cause Evictions Ordinance Community Workshop, and PG&E outages.
- 3/31/23 Meeting with Public Works Director Umbertis regarding crack sealing, slurry sealing, sidewalk surveys, storm drain surveys, street assessments on Scenic, Pine, and Bolinas, and proposed TAM projects (Sir Francis Drake and Fairfax-Bolinas Rd pavement management)

3/31/23—Meeting regarding State Route 37 with Congressman Jared Huffman, Councilmember Brian Colbert, Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit Manager Eddy Cumins, and Transportation Authority of Marin Executive Director Anne Richman regarding SMART integration for ‘Segment A’ of the Resilient State Route 37 project.

3/31/23—Meeting regarding the Mill Valley E-bike ordinance and possible partnerships for similar education campaigns for students in Fairfax with Marin County Bicycle Coalition and Councilmember Lisel Blash

4/4/23—Check-in with Linda Neal, Principal Planner at the Town of Fairfax, regarding the ongoing process and timeline for Fairfax Lumber’s proposed fence on Spruce Road.

4/4/23—Discussion with Marin Health and Human Services regarding Narcan accessibility in the Ross Valley.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Ross Valley Fire Board (RVFB)

- At our March meeting the Ross Valley Fire Board unanimously directed staff to formally explore a Joint Powers Agreement (e.g., “shared services agreement”) with Central Marin Fire instead of a standalone model. Such an agreement would allow the Ross Valley Fire Dept. to shared leadership (i.e., a fire chief, and multiple battalion chiefs). Because the proposed organizational structure uses existing personnel reassigned to eliminate duplication and focus on more strategic needs, the cost would likely be approximately or possibly slightly less than the current cost. It was also the option that was likely to best maintain service and avoid any significant interruptions. The presentation and report on the various alternatives the Fire Board considered [can be found here](#).
- The Marin IJ [carried a story](#) about the Fire Board’s support for investigating a Joint Powers Agreement with Central Marin Fire on March 12th.
- The RVFD will once again apply to FEMA for a SAFER grant. The grant is a three-year term to assist fire departments by paying a portion of the salaries and benefits of the SAFER-funded positions. Securing this funding would allow the RVFD to add an additional firefighter to an engine sooner than anticipated to ensure we achieve a minimum of three firefighters to each engine and provide safe, effective, and reliable service. [Read the staff report on the SAFER grant here](#).

Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA)

- At our March meeting, the Governing Board received our 2022 Measure A Annual Report. Measure A is a 20-year parcel tax (commencing in 2015-26 and ending in 2034-35). Homeowners may apply for a low-income senior exemption for the Measure A Parcel tax. To qualify for a Low-Income Senior Exemption for the Measure A parcel tax for a single-family residence, you must (1) be 65 years of age or older by December 31, 2023, (2) own and occupy your residence, and (3) not have earned a total annual household income of more than \$104,400 in 2022. **The deadline to file a Low-Income Senior Exemption application for the 2023-24 tax year is June 1, 2023.** [Please review the FAQ here](#).
- At our March meeting, the Marin Emergency Radio Authority reviewed the FY 23-24 budget. The overall budget increase proposed for FY 23-24 is 19.64%. More information can be found under Item B-3, [here](#). As a result, MERA [member contributions](#) will increase roughly 25%. The FY 23/24 agency total for the Town of Fairfax will see a change of

\$13,485 to an estimated total of \$67,759. Ross Valley Fire will see an increase in 27%, from \$57,339 to \$72,647—a delta of \$15,308.

Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM)

- At our March meeting, The Commissioner's received and approved the Measure A/AA ½-Cent Transportation Sales Tax and the Measure B \$10 Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF) revenue projection recommended for the FY2023-24 TAM Annual Budget development. Given a variety of global and national concerns such as global political instability, weak export markets, end of fiscal stimulus, high inflation, interest rate hikes, and a possible recession, staff has determined to take a conservative view on revenue projections to hedge against any major negative impacts to TAM's financial health. TAM approved the staff recommendation setting the FY2023-24 Measure A/AA budget level at \$35.68 million—a .5% growth rate for FY2023-24—and the long-term growth rate at 2% annually thereafter for the update of the Measure A/AA Strategic Plan.
- Furthermore, Measure B revenue estimates were reduced due to significant revenue drops over the last several years. The most recent data from the Forecasting Unit of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) shows that the estimated number of vehicles registered in Marin County in 2022 suffered another 2.59% loss from 2021 after the 3.09% drop from 2020 to 2021.
- **I highly recommend that staff, council, and the public review the economic trends and revenue projections presented by TAM staff.** [They can be found on Page 31 of the March packet.](#)
- The Commissioners received an update on a recent Study of the Hub Intersection in San Anselmo conducted by Parisi Transportation. The Hub, connecting Sir Francis Drake Boulevard with Red Hill Avenue and Center Boulevard, is one of the most congested intersections in the County. It connects the communities of West Marin, Fairfax, Ross and San Anselmo to San Rafael and Highway 101. The Hub processes over 65,000 vehicles each day. The intent of the planning study is to consider potential operational and safety improvements to the intersection and approaching roadways for all modes of travel. [The presentation on the Hub Study can be found on Page 55 of the March packet.](#) No action was taken at the meeting; however, a number of Commissioners—myself included—called on TAM to recognize the regional significance of Hub improvements, and the need to present and workshop these solutions with other communities in the Ross Valley.
- This month the TAM Citizens' Oversight Committee released their annual report for FY 21-22. [The annual report can be accessed here.](#)
- TAM is promoting a new video developed as part of the Commute37 Pilot Program. The Commute37 pilot program is a partnership of the Solano Transportation Authority, Napa Valley Transportation Authority, the Transportation Authority of Marin, and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, and is funded by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. [Click here to check out the video.](#)
- Commute with Enterprise and Transportation Authority of Marin are teaming up to help Marin employers with employee transportation. On Wednesday, April 19th at 12 pm, TAM will be hosting a 30-minute info session to learn more about how vanpooling can benefit your business. [RSVP here.](#)

Ross Valley Yellow School Bus Joint Exercise Powers Agreement (JEPA)

- At our March meeting, the Ross Valley Yellow School Bus JEPA received an update on the state of the yellow bus program and discussed the new contract for yellow bus program services. The current 5 vehicle program operated by Michael's Transportation serves 613 students across White Hill Middle School, Hidden Valley Elementary, and Ross Valley Charter.
- Recently an evaluation panel recommended that Bauer Transportation take over operations for the Yellow Bus program. They have 30 years of experience and currently partner with the Branson School and Marin Academy. They also utilize "RidePal" tracking and routing so parents can track whether their student has "tagged" on or off the bus and if there are bus delays.
- The FY 23-24 budget will likely see an increase in one-way pass price for most students. The budget presented estimates that one-way pass prices will increase from \$515 to \$585. Income-qualified one-way pass prices will remain at \$100.
- At the next meeting, FY 23-24 service planning will see adjustments to bus route schedules due to new bell times at various schools, new pass prices, and evaluation and refinement of the pass distribution/lottery process.

Marin Economic Forum

- Following March 24th Marin IJ story entitled "[Marin unemployment rate remains at 3.1% in February](#)," I reached out to the chief economist at the Marin Economic Forum to discuss the unusual California Employment Development Department/U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data point about Fairfax, which suggested that Fairfax's unemployment rate sat at 7.6%--the highest in the County of Marin behind Inverness. (Our neighbors in San Anselmo had an unemployment rate of 2.9% for the month of February.) In speaking with Dr. Rob Eyler, I was able to confirm the source of the data and, with his help, pull all the employment data for the last decade to understand trends in Fairfax unemployment data. Over the last several months, unemployment has been growing in Fairfax, and it is something to keep an eye on. Dr. Eyler did suggest paying close attention to sales tax revenue, which can track with unemployment. Furthermore, Dr. Eyler noted that it is difficult for state and federal agencies to closely track self-employed individuals, and an uptick in unemployment might be correlated to other trends in the labor market, namely a shift of Fairfax residents from employees of an organization to independent consultants.