



SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE January 10, 2024
PREPARED FOR Mayor and Town Council
PREPARED BY Heather Abrams, Town Manager
SUBJECT Approve Project Charter with Marin County for Bolinas Road

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Council approve the attached Project Charter with Marin County for Bolinas Road.

BACKGROUND

Bolinas Road runs from Broadway in downtown Fairfax uphill and continues past Town-limits to the Marin County unincorporated area of Bolinas, where it is referred to as the Fairfax-Bolinas Road. Bolinas Road has a long history of issues, including pavement failures, landslides, etc. that are associated with its location, exposure to environmental hazards, and steep terrain. Bolinas Road experienced major landslides last winter, which happened to be in the unincorporated portion of the road. Marin County, and Fairfax staff and elected officials (including Council Member Chance Cutrano and Supervisor Katie Rice) have been working together to communicate with the impacted public, explore the options for Regional, State and Federal grants, and repair the road.

DISCUSSION

The attached project charter is based on a draft one-page project description being developed for grant applications. The project charter form was suggested by the County Director of Public Works, Rosemaire Gaglione, because it has been successfully used by CalTrans and other local jurisdictions to execute large projects together. The intent of the project charter is to provide a framework for the County of Marin and the Town of Fairfax to work together. Grant applications can open and close quickly, and the process for getting on a Town Council agenda and a Board of Supervisors agenda can take a minimum of several weeks, so having this project charter will be helpful in making the two jurisdictions nimble enough to successfully complete grant applications.

The project charter is a first step. Additional Council actions will be needed in order to win grants and do significant repairs on Bolinas Road. The Town Manager's current spending authority is up to \$25,000 before Council Authority is required. The Council generally meets on the first Wednesday of each month, therefore timely updates to the Council will be critical in securing matching funding as the project progresses.

Emphasizing the need for grants and the opportunity to cut costs by working together with other jurisdictions, the Town has a significant backlog of road repair needs throughout the Town and its pavement condition index score is the lowest in the County. Although very much in need of repairs, Bolinas Road was not among the most critical repairs planned in FY 23-24. Town Council discussion and approval would be required before additional Town funding commitments can be made. A future update

to this project charter could include the possibility of Town general fund allocation, applying for a loan(s) from another agency or financial institution, or seeking voter approved bond funding.

FISCAL IMPACT

None at this time

ATTACHMENT

Proposed Project Charter

Bolinas Road Project Charter

The purpose of this Project Charter (Charter) is to establish a mutual understanding of the Bolinas Road Repair Project as of this date and to define the roles and responsibilities of each of the agencies currently involved in the project. This Charter will be updated as new developments take place. Although a critical roadway, Bolinas Road has been the site of several recent and historic landslides, which threaten critical infrastructure and access.

County of Marin and the Town of Fairfax are collaborating to develop a project to secure Bolinas Road between Porteous Avenue in Fairfax and Kent Pump Road (the Alpine Dam maintenance access). Key stakeholder agencies for the project are the Marin Municipal Water District (Marin Water), Marin Fire Department, and the Ross Valley Fire Department.

The parties intend to work together to secure funding through local, State and Federal grants, plus funding matches from the parties themselves, to repair, replace, or install the pavement, retaining walls and other infrastructure needed to make Bolinas Road more secure in its current alignment and width. The parties intend to share in the effort and costs associated with preparing grant applications, administering grants awarded, providing engineering investigation, designing, and estimating the project throughout its location. The parties may work together in bidding, project managing, and constructing the project. This is anticipated to provide effective and efficient repair of the continuous roadway, and it will necessitate a unique level of coordination and cooperation between multiple agencies.

Background

Project Boundaries and Road Ownership: A portion of the road within the public right of way is maintained by the County of Marin and another portion by the Town of Fairfax. The County limit line is just uphill from Fawn Ridge Road at approximately milepost 0.95

Recent Activity

Bolinas Road was impacted by landslides at nine separate locations during the 2022-23 winter season. The two highest priority locations within the unincorporated area are being secured with emergency retaining walls at a cost of \$4.3 million. Approximately \$400,000 of local funding has been spent in 2023 to patch and seal the most vulnerable sections of road. The remaining seven slide locations are planned to be repaired over the next 24 months. It is estimated that an additional \$39.3 million is needed to construct the rest of these known retaining walls, identify and secure other unstable slopes, and address drainage systems and pavement surface damages to minimize the risk of future slides from occurring. In 2023, the Town of Fairfax expended approximately \$50,000 for road patching, crack sealing, and edge clearing on Bolinas Road, within town-limits. Another retaining wall repair within the Town of Fairfax is currently in the design phase and is estimated to require \$400,000 to \$600,000 in urgent repairs.

Critical Access Route

Constructed on a steep slope along the north side of Mount Tamalpais, Bolinas Road is a winding, narrow two-lane roadway that connects the communities of Fairfax and Bolinas. The road provides the only access to critical Marin Municipal Water District infrastructure that provides one third of the drinking water supply to the county. The road also serves as an

evacuation route for the residential community southwest of Fairfax. Being the only East-West roadway across the County between Panoramic Highway in the South and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in the North, Bolinas Road is the primary response route for firefighting personnel to access a vast Very High Fire Severity Zone.

Critical Infrastructure Served

Drinking Water Supply: Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) relies heavily on their facilities off Bolinas Road. If the road is closed, or a lane closure is needed on a curve, there is an untenable risk of diminishing Marin Water supply by about 1/3 of total production. The County of Marin has a population of 206,206, so roughly 85,000 people could be without potable water supply if Bolinas Road were impassable. With an already critical water supply and regular drought restrictions, diminished water supply would have drastic consequences with respect to not only hospitals, schools, businesses and residences, but also to fire protection. Traveling through this site from the east is the only safe access road for treatment plant chemical truck deliveries which occur on a regular basis. The chemical trucks that deliver to Bon Tempe Treatment Plant are 54 feet long and can only carry 4,000 gallons at a time. Deliveries cannot be made via Ridgecrest Road from Mt. Tamalpais onto Bolinas Road since there are multiple hair pin turns down that road. Chemical trucks will not attempt to deliver through the detour under any circumstances as an overturned chemical truck on Bolinas Road would do extensive environmental damage and is a difficult area to recover.

Bon Tempe Dam and Alpine Dam: both are identified in the MMWD Hazard Mitigation Plan as high-risk facilities. Earthquakes, extreme storms and fires all carry a risk of damage and may present the need for emergency inspections and emergency repairs. Timely response is critical.

Evacuation, Critical Environmental and Facility Protection, Emergency Response and Fire Safety: Bolinas Road is the only efficient response route for Cal Fire to respond to the Mount Tamalpais Mutual Threat Zone (MTZ): a vast Very High Fire Severity Zone: <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/fhsz-maps> interfacing many surrounding communities of Marin County. Fire risks include damage to these communities, wildlife, environmentally sensitive areas, and critical infrastructure for water supply and nationally critical communication assets. Even a lane closure on an already narrow twisty stretch of roadway effectively closes the road to fire engines and CalFire's bulldozer.

Critical Communication Equipment: Equipment Facility J-33 is a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) radar station of the Joint Surveillance System's Western Air Defense Sector (WADS) with an Air Route Surveillance Radar (ARSR-4) and is in the MTZ. This, along with regionally significant Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) and other cellular communication towers could be destroyed by delayed or hindered emergency services response or impacted by maintenance route closure.

Tamalpais Watershed Mount Ranger Station: There is a ranger station that is accessed via Skyview Road via Bolinas Road. Rangers serve as first responders, providing medical aid, running search and rescue missions, and keeping visitors safe. They also play a critical role in protecting the watershed from wildfire. Public and Ranger safety is significantly impacted by road closure.

Community and Recreation: Bolinas Road is a minor arterial road that joins the inland community of Fairfax and the coastal community of Bolinas. This road is by far the most popular bike route in Marin County attracting cyclists from all over the bay area. This route also attracts recreational hikers, photographers, and tourists. This influx of users combined with local traffic creates a very busy stretch of a narrow curvy roadway. The road is over fourteen miles which presents a detour of over two hours. Furthermore, the detour route is often closed for storm weather several times each year leaving no ingress or egress.

Funding Needs

The partner agencies are seeking \$39.3 million in funding to complete the pending roadway repairs at known locations, to assess the condition of the slopes along Bolinas Road to identify other vulnerabilities, and to design and construct additional recommended slope stabilizations, drainage modifications, and roadway structural repairs. These improvements are needed to ensure the resiliency of this critical facility.

Matching Funding: Both parties desire to move quickly to take advantage of upcoming grant opportunities. Timely updates to the Council and the Board will be critical in securing matching funding as the project progresses and as grant opportunities arise. County staff and Town staff will bring a report to the Board and to the Council respectively for consideration of grant funding opportunities and present alternatives for the associated local funds. Board and Council direction will be introduced to the revised project charter.

Project Vision, Goals and Objectives

Vision: Provide safe and reliable passage on Bolinas Road for regional critical infrastructure needs, first responders, residents, and recreational users.

Goals and Objectives:

- Repair, replace, and stabilize Bolinas Road to provide reliable critical access,
- Significantly reduce on-going threat of loss of road use due to emergency,
- Reduce total cost of project through planning and normal bidding processes and project delivery, rather than use of emergency repairs process
- Provide a better road surface for the current frequent use by road cyclists
- Provide information to stakeholders (residents, cyclists, etc.) on conditions, constraints, plans, and how they can help secure Bolinas Road

Key Performance Indicators:

- PCI rating on the project area
- Grant funding secured
- Incidents of road closure and partial road closure
- Lane miles repaired, replaced, retained

Parties Roles and Responsibilities:

- Participate in scheduled meetings, conference calls, workshops, planning sessions and project communications efforts

- Review and provide timely comments on project documents, reports, deliverables, and communications materials
- Notify the project team of changes in data, costs, level of effort that could impact the project, its funding, its delivery, or timing
- Seek funding from local, state, and federal sources in coordination with the parties
- Research and determine local match fund resources and availability. Local matches vary by grant type but may be as much as 25%. Each jurisdiction would be responsible for the local match needed for grant funded work within their jurisdiction only.
- Participate in the development of further documents and updates to this Charter in order to further the project
- Commit to implement future maintenance projects to keep Bolinas Road in good repair where the project provides repair, replacement, or retaining walls

Project Contacts and Roles

County of Marin:

Agency	Contact	Roles and Responsibilities
County of Marin	Katie Rice, Supervisor Katie.Rice@MarinCounty.gov	Convene high level stake holders, provide State, Federal, and Local contacts, wayfinding, and support for project funding and communication
County of Marin	Nancy Vernon, Aide to Supervisor Rice Nancy.Vernon@MarinCounty.gov	Convene stake holders, provide contacts and support external and internal to County, facilitate communications from and with County
County of Marin	Rosemarie Gaglione, Director of Public Works Rosemarie.Gaglione@MarinCounty.gov	Provide executive level technical support to the project, convene County resources, understand and communicate project process and timeline from County perspective
County of Marin, Office of Emergency Management	Steven Torrence, Director of Emergency Management storrence@marincounty.org	Provide connection, support and advice regarding disaster preparedness, prevention, resilience, and recovery grants and plans
County of Marin	Rachel Calvert, Senior Civil Engineer Rachel.Calvert@MarinCounty.gov	Project design, estimation, communication with residents

County of Marin	Christopher Blunk, Interim Assistant Director of Public Works Christopher.Blunk@MarinCounty.gov	Provide oversight and act in the Director's absence
Marin Municipal Water District (Marin Water)	Ben Horenstein, General Manager bhorenstein@marinwater.org	Provide connection, support and advice regarding project grant
Town of Fairfax	Barbara Coler, Mayor bcoler@townoffairfax.org	Convene Town Council support and ensure items appear on the Town Council Agenda when needed in a timely fashion
Town of Fairfax	Chance Cutrano, Council Member ccutrano@townoffairfax.org	Convene high level stakeholders, provide State, Federal, and Local contacts, wayfinding, and support for project funding and communication
Town of Fairfax	Heather Abrams, Town Manager habrams@townoffairfax.org	Convene stake holders, provide contacts and executive level support external and internal to Town, facilitate communications from and with Town at high level
Town of Fairfax	Loren Umbertis, Director of Public Works lumbertis@townoffairfax.org	Provide coordination on a technical level with County, engineers/designers, funders, contractors, direct communication with residents specific to road conditions and repairs

This project charter shall be effective from the last date of approval and execution by the representatives of the parties and shall be effective thereafter for 18 months or until a revised project charter, or an MOU regarding the project is executed, whichever time period is shorter. The Charter may be executed in counterparts.