

DAMON CONNOLLY

Fall 2019

SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 1

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Dear Friends,

We head into fall with a robust agenda and a full calendar. I take this opportunity to highlight some of our key priorities, and report on some accomplishments.

Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority: The allure of this time of year has been tempered by the clear and present danger that is now at the top of everyone's minds: the threat of wildfire. County-wide, we have lessons learned from Sonoma County and Paradise, and are doing what we can to prepare for when disaster strikes closer to home. On September 23rd the Board of Supervisors moved forward on the [Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority](#), to provide fire protection and emergency response services to communities in Marin. You can watch my perspective on the measure in an interview with [KRON4 Inside Bay Area Politics](#) (at minute 6:30).

I encourage you to sign up for [Alert Marin](#) and [Nixle](#). Nixle shares informational alerts that do not necessarily require action, and targets specific zip codes. Alert Marin is used for sharing emergency alerts that require immediate action and is only used in emergencies. Alert Marin will target specific streets, and is customizable to be received via call, text, email, TYY or a combination.

I hope you find this newsletter valuable. My door is open, please let me know what you are thinking.

Damon

Upcoming Opportunities

- Wildfire Home Hardening Seminar for HOMEOWNERS. Nov 19, Embassy Suites. Live fire demonstration at 5pm, seminar from 6-8pm. [Friesafemarin.org/events](https://friesafemarin.org/events)
- All **Drawdown:Marin** related events are listed on this [Calendar](#).
- Free community class and resiliency fair for homeowners interested in solar and battery storage. Oct 26, 11:30 at Terra Linda High. Sign up [here](#).
- Francisco Blvd West Multiuse Path is OPEN! Take a ride from Andersen to Rice Drive in downtown San Rafael on this beautiful new pathway.
- New bike path is open along San Antonio Creek under Highway 101 at the Sonoma/Marin County line. I am excited to check it out, see a map [here](#).
- There is an opening on the Assessment Appeals Board, which hears appeals by property owners regarding value assessments. The seat is open until filled. This board has specific requirements regarding professional experience. Applications for this, and other Boards and Commissions can be found [here](#).

North Coast Rail Authority

In August I was appointed by my colleagues to the [North Coast Rail Authority](#) which oversees the rail line from Larkspur to Humboldt Bay.

A visionary plan for a 300-mile multi-use path from Larkspur to north of Eureka is in the works as the North Coast Rail Authority (NCRA) begins to wind down operations as an agency and begins a transition toward future uses of the rail right of way, including the establishment of an innovative idea known as the [Great Redwood Trail](#). The concept would connect blacktop in populated areas and dirt trails in rural sections, adjacent to deteriorating train tracks, throughout five counties to offer hiking, biking and horseback riding.

Fellow NCRA Board member Belvedere Mayor James Campbell and I had the opportunity to tour the Humboldt County end of the line recently, and look forward to the hard work of winding down the NCRA, and the fun work of envisioning a world class pathway.

Senator Mike McGuire has been, and will continue to be, instrumental in working on state funding to wind down the NCRA. Check out [The Great Redwood Trail](#), and let me know your thoughts.



Damon and James Campbell at Eel River Access Point

#RideWithDamon 2019

In 2015, I committed to use only a bicycle, public transit and the occasional carpool for a month. My goal was driven by my concern for the environment, and by my desire to understand the transportation systems I make decisions about. That was four years ago, and I have repeated my personal challenge every April since, and even extended it to two straight months this year.

During 2019's version of #RideWithDamon, I reduced 1,623 miles of single occupancy vehicle travel by using a combination of Marin Transit, Golden Gate Transit (bus and ferry), SMART, BART, and Amtrak, as well as my bicycle and a borrowed e-bike to check out that option.

My biggest day was a morning commute on Golden Gate Ferry into San Francisco for a Metropolitan Transportation Commission Board meeting, traveling back to San Rafael on Golden Gate Transit Route 101 for the County budget hearings, across the Richmond San Rafael Bridge via Bus Route 40, and then taking Amtrak to Sacramento for a California State Association of Counties meeting. These kinds of trips proved doable with a little planning and flexibility.

On Bike to Work Day I was joined by County Public Health Officer Dr. Matt Willis and San Anselmo Councilmember Brian Colbert. We rode from the Golden Gate Bridge to the Marin Civic Center, stopping at energizer stations along the way. We saw many friends along the route. The light rain at the start did not dampen our 4:30am start!

The gaps are closing! On July 16th the Francisco Boulevard West Multi-Use Pathway along the SMART Larkspur Extension opened between Andersen Drive and Rice Drive in San Rafael. This Multi-Use Pathway is for safe pedestrian and bicycle transportation and closes a critical gap in Marin's North-

South Greenway. It is also a part of the [San Francisco Bay Trail](#). Funding for this pathway came from the City of San Rafael, the County of Marin, the Transportation Authority of Marin, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

The Grand Avenue Bridge Path in San Rafael also opened this summer. This connection between the San Rafael Canal and Central San Rafael makes walking and biking safer in the area, especially for students walking to San Rafael High. This was a pinch point that I have written about numerous times and experienced firsthand on #RideWithDamon.

We still need improvements on timely service performance, efficient connections, and a practical transit connection between Marin and the East Bay.

In the next few months, the SMART train will go to Larkspur, providing key public transit connectivity between Marin and San Francisco.

#RideWithDamon 2019 is in the books.



Damon Connolly and Brian Colbert riding from Golden Gate Bridge back to the Civic Center on Bike to Work Day

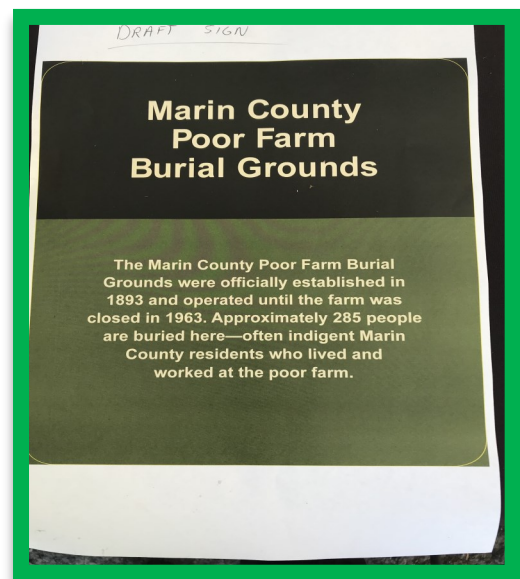
Parks and Open Space Updates!

Recognizing the Marin County Poor Farm

Less than a year ago, high school students Mitchell Tanaka and Georgia Lee created a short film, titled "A Silent Legacy," about the "Marin County Poor Farm" where indigent Marin County residents lived and worked in the Lucas Valley area starting in 1893, and where some were also buried. Mitchell and Georgia started a Change.org petition asking that the burial grounds be recognized. I worked with Marin County Parks staff to make that vision a reality, and recently we built a split rail fence along the perimeter of the graveyard. There were 7 teenagers plus local residents who joined us. The ground was rock solid, so I had the opportunity to run a jack hammer, attack the ground with a pick ax, and shovel dirt. A special thank you to Marin Parks staff who were willing to think outside the box on a truly unique request from some motivated young people who saw this project through.



Volunteers joined Marin County Parks and Open Space staff in providing signage and fencing at the Poor Farm Burial Grounds



Ponti Ridge. Marin County Open Space District is converting an unsustainable and steep fire road to a multi-use trail near Pacheco Valle, between Lucas Valley and Novato. A section of the upper segment of Ponti Fire Road is geologically unstable, and a section of the road experienced a major landslide in 2005. The project aims to provide the public with a safe multi-use trail system to enhance the visitor experience, reduce the environmental impacts on sensitive resources by reducing sedimentation and erosion, and establish a sustainable system of roads and trails that meet design and management standards and would provide year-round access. Trail work is underway. Follow this [Link](#) to learn more.

Springs Hill Trail. Work is complete on the Springs Hill Trail, which runs between Springs Hill Fire Road and Patricia Fire Road, creating a connection through Luiz Ranch Fire Road, the 680 Trail, and beyond. This trail in popular Terra Linda/ Sleepy Hollow Preserve is open to hikers, cyclists, and equestrians.

Marin County Homelessness down; while all around the Bay Area numbers surge— *what are we doing that's making the difference?*

Several strategies working together are paying off in moving people living on the streets for years in Marin County into housing. Through Housing First and Coordinated Entry, using a vulnerability index, we can identify people who are the most physically and mentally vulnerable and get them to the top of the list when a unit becomes available. Marin Housing Authority provides housing choice vouchers while Whole Person Care provides case management to make sure people can be successful in maintaining their housing. Our Landlord Partnership has also been an important part of the equation by increasing the number of landlords willing to accept vouchers.

This year's Point in Time Count, conducted nationwide on one day in January, revealed that though San Rafael and Novato both saw significant reductions in unsheltered homelessness (30% and 13%, respectively), other areas, like Richardson Bay and West Marin, saw increases. Marin Health and Human Services is working closely with partners in those regions to expand work begun in 2016 to identify each person experiencing chronic homelessness and connect them with housing through coordinated entry.

Other key findings for Marin: family homelessness is down 28 percent; and youth homelessness is down 11 percent; the total count of people experiencing homelessness in Marin is 1,034 individuals, a 7 percent reduction. This is especially notable given significant increases in homelessness across other Bay Area counties.

Finally, the PIT Count confirmed that nearly three-quarters of people experiencing homelessness in this county are locals. Over 70% of people experiencing homelessness lived in Marin before they lost their housing. People who become homeless stay where they have connections, where things feel familiar. This is consistent with reports nationwide.

Counts in San Francisco, Contra Costa and Alameda Counties showed a surge in homelessness:

San Francisco's numbers were up almost 8% and revealed that job loss was the number one driver, followed by substance abuse, eviction and personal conflicts with family or friends who had previously housed them;

Alameda showed a 42.5% increase in homelessness over the 2017 count;

Contra Costa County saw a spike of almost 43% over 2017 count.

Santa Clara County's homelessness count went up more than 31% while San Mateo's count was up 20%. Solano and Sonoma Counties showed declines. Results in every jurisdiction revealed some equity issues that need to be addressed, a disproportionate number of people of color are finding themselves without shelter.

MEDICINAL CANNIBAS

Delivery-only Retail Licenses approved for Two Dispensaries

In 2017 the Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance 3678 establishing a framework for up to four delivery-only retailers (closed to the public) in the unincorporated areas of the county to meet the medical needs of and expand options for patients to access medical cannabis. A total of 15 applications were received with six qualifying to advance to the next phase. A lottery was conducted to reduce the pool of applicants to four who submitted site review applications in May for the final phase of the selection process.

Three applicants proposed separate premises within an office complex and a lottery was used to choose one applicant for that location. The fourth applicant was approved for licensing at another location. That means a total of two delivery services will now come online. The applicants that were not chosen by lottery were invited to find different locations and come back for site review.

Making Progress on the Stepping Up Initiative

Stepping Up is a nationwide initiative intended to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jails. In Marin, our Behavioral Health, Detention Services, Courts, Probation, the District Attorney and Public Defender have joined forces to address the unique challenges presented by people with mental illness in the criminal justice system.

We have increased access to mental health professionals, mental health evaluation and services in jail and have a stabilization team to provide counseling and group/milieu programming.

The Courts have added Pathways to their mental health specialty Courts, providing the same

kinds of services and programming for misdemeanants with mental illness that are available to felons with mental illness. We are now able to provide case management, housing options and reduced charges after a period of time dedicated to addressing underlying behavioral health issues.

We are now working on data sharing in order to track outcomes and monitor progress of each strategy.



Key Policies and Priorities

Please check out our District 1 [webpage](#) to see my key policies and priorities. You will also find useful links to neighborhood associations, who we communicate with regularly. You will find my Board assignments to committees and regional boards.

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Online Addresses:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Newsletter](#)



LOCAL OFFICE HOURS

Scotty's Market

Saturday, October 26, 10am-noon

An opportunity for people who might not otherwise have the time to meet and discuss county or neighborhood issues. Connect with me regarding anything on your mind. I hope to see you there!



All County publications are available in alternative formats (Braille, Large Print, or CD), upon request. Requests for accommodations may be made by calling (415) 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.