



**FIRST 5 MARIN**

Learn. Grow. Thrive.

## Spotlight: Forum on the Housing Element, Affordable & Equitable Housing

The **Marin Communications Forum**, sponsored by First 5 Marin, recently hosted 150 guests for an online forum about the Marin County Housing Element. (See below for a link to a video recording of the meeting.)



We began with a presentation from **Leelee Thomas and Liz Darby** with the **County of Marin**, explaining the housing element process, the major issues, a status report and the next steps.

This was followed by short statements from a variety of housing advocates:

- \***Mike Blakely**, Marin Economic Forum
- \***Aaron Burnett**, Canal Alliance
- \***Stephanie Hellman**, Mayor of Fairfax
- \***Laurel Hill**, Community Action Marin
- \***Lucie Hollingsworth**, Legal Aid of Marin
- \***Linda M. Jackson**, Aging Action Initiative & San Rafael City Schools
- \***Stacey Laumann**, Community Land Trust of West Marin (CLAM)
- \***Robert Pendoley**, Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative
- \***Suzanne Sadowsky**, San Geronimo Valley Affordable Housing Association
- \***Amarantha Silva & Veronica Duarte** - Parent Voices of Marin

There were a number of public comments as well. Overall it was a very robust discussion with some important takeaways from the speakers:

- **A Marin family with \$200,000** in income can "afford" a \$705,000 house-- but there AREN'T any homes for \$705,000 in unincorporated Marin County!
- **Over 100 housing units are at risk** in the building set to be refurbished at 400 Canal Street in San Rafael.
- Fairfax just approved "**just cause eviction**" and "**rent stabilization**" measures. (71% of their residents are financially unstable, earning below 80% of the median income.)
- One of the important things that renters don't have? "**Cost consistency**"— that is knowing what their payment will be each month, and next year.
- **Our elders are "aging into poverty.** Senior "incomes" don't go up as rents

increase—so they don't know which month or which year they won't be able to afford to live in their own homes.

- **Low-income renters** often can't afford rent units designated for the number of people in their family.
- **West Marin finds more success with affordable housing** because it's a small area, so support is readily available + the buildings/developments are usually not impactful, so not opposed + displacement happens to people who are considered friends and neighbors. It's personal.
- **The average age** in the unincorporated part of Marin is **47 years old**; but elsewhere the average is up to **65 years!**
- Many **immigrants** who are long-time residents of Marin now can't afford to stay... or they can't afford to stop working and retire.
- **Caregivers can't afford to live in Marin**— and they are needed “across the lifespan,” for infants and toddlers, for afterschool care, for the disabled and others needing assistance, and for the elderly.
- **“What will happen next” with affordable housing?** Not much. Many projects are approved but not moving forward due to construction costs (labor and supplies).
- **“SB 35 projects” get a quick review/approval**, but no design/review process. This approach could backfire. [But “Objective Design Development Standards” can be approved (in advance) for projects that will be exempt from the design/review process.]
- **Affordable housing is a family issue.** Even if you can afford to live here, can your children? Your grandchildren?
- **35% of residents in the San Geronimo Valley are 75 or older.**
- **People of color and low-income residents** are disproportionately affected by the housing crisis in Marin.
- **Many low-income residents spend 50 to 70% of their income on rent!**
- **Many renters live in constant fear of a rent increase.**
- While much of the discussion is about affordability, we also need to build **accessible housing** to accommodate all types of renters with a wide variety of needs.
- **It can be traumatic looking for an apartment in Marin!**

**DID YOU MISS THIS EVENT?!** If you missed the forum but would like to hear the discussion, we have good news! The recording is available on the County of Marin's meetings webpage. Click [HERE](#) for the link and scroll down to the blue bar that says "**Community Meetings and Workshops.**" Scroll down again and select "**County of Marin/First 5 Marin - November 17, 2022**" [The direct link to the video on Youtube can be accessed [HERE](#).]

**See you in 2023!** We are working on new forum topics for 2023. Watch for announcements from First 5 Marin and/or follow (and LIKE) the Forum on social media: [www.Facebook.com/MarinCommunicationsForum](http://www.Facebook.com/MarinCommunicationsForum)

**JOIN US for the next meeting of the First 5 Marin Children and Families Commission. We will be meeting in-person at Wednesday, January 18th from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. at First 5 Marin, 1050 Northgate, Suite 130, in San**

Rafael. (You may also join the meeting online; for the Zoom link, please email [Michelle@First5Marin.org](mailto:Michelle@First5Marin.org).)

## First 5 Things to Read in the News Today!

Take a look at some of the recent articles about important issues related to children and families:



### [1.The Washington Post](#)

#### **RSV, covid and flu push hospitals to the brink — and it may get worse**

Hospitals are hitting capacity from RSV, flu, COVID and staffing shortages.

### [2.CBS News:](#)

#### **Preschool at retirement complex promotes intergenerational learning**

### [3.Harvard Business Review:](#)

#### **5 Things Employers Get Wrong About Caregivers at Work**

Companies have serious blindspots about their caregiver population and regularly make assumptions that can undermine their stated values and goals — along with their bottom line.

### [4.The Hechinger Report:](#)

#### **The complex world of pre-K play**

Young kids benefit from play. But what should it look like?

### [5.Brookings](#)

#### **Starting and sustaining community schools: 10 tips for district leaders**

A "community school" is a local school transformation strategy that creates the conditions for all students to excel in their learning, pursue their passions, and access the resources and skills needed to reach their goals.

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**Happy  
Thanksgiving  
from First 5  
Marin!**