



Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council

## **AGENDA**

### **Regular Meeting**

**August 08, 2024 05:30 PM**

**EI Molino Library, 7050 Covey Road, Forestville, CA 95436**

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/lrrmac>

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/91302647587?pwd=lhhR9E6pMaS7updV8pSXbpCDi6nkFw.1>

Chair & Rio Nido Representative: Pip Marquez de la Plata • Vice Chair & Cazadero / Duncan Mills Representative: Mike Nicholls • Guerneville Representative: Joe Rogoff • Guerneville Representative: Spencer R. Scott • Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke • Monte Rio / Villa Grande Representative: Cynthia Strecker • Hacienda Representative: Vicki Clewes • Forestville Representative: Lonnie Lazar • Forestville Representative: Thai Hilton

### **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

The Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council will make reasonable accommodations for persons having special needs due to disabilities. Please contact the Fifth District Field Representative at 707-565-1219 during regular business hours at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to ensure necessary accommodations are made.

#### **1. Call to Order**

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

#### **2. Approval of Agenda**

**Discussion**    **Possible Action**

This approval process ensures that the agenda accurately reflects the items to be discussed and decided upon. Members may request adjustments to the agenda, including reordering or deletion of items at this time. Any changes must comply with the Brown Act requirements for public notice and agenda setting. The agenda must be finalized before the Council proceeds with other meeting items.

#### **3. Statement of Conflict of Interest**

**Discussion**

This is the time for the Chair, Vice Chair and Council Members to indicate any statements of conflict of interest for any item listed on this agenda. The River MAC bylaws state that members will not involve themselves in official River MAC activities that could materially benefit them personally, their business interests, or the interests of organizations that they represent. In a conflict of interest, the member will abstain from voting, and the abstention will be recorded in the minutes.

**4. Consent Agenda**

Discussion  Possible Action

These items are expected to be routine and non-controversial. The Lower Russian River MAC will act upon them at one time without discussion. Any Representatives, staff member or interested party may request that an item be removed from the consent agenda for discussion.

A. July 11 Minutes

B. 2023 Annual Report

**5. Councilmember comment on matters not listed on the agenda**

Discussion

Comments are restricted to matters within the Board’s jurisdiction. Please be brief and limit spoken comments to one minute. Due to Brown Act regulations, this is not a time for discussion of any item, however a brief dialogue about considering an item for a future agenda is permitted during this time.

**6. Public Comments**

On Matters not listed on the agenda: Comments are restricted to matters within the Lower Russian River MAC’s jurisdiction. Please be brief and limit spoken comments to two minutes.

**7. County Update from Supervisor Lynda Hopkins / Staff**

Discussion

**8. Public Access, Safety and Stewardship along the lower Russian River**

Discussion

With a panel including: Don McEnhill, Executive Director Russian Riverkeepers, Steve Ehret, Park Planning Manager, Regional Parks; David Robinson, Park Manager Regional Parks

Background material:

- [A legal guide to the public’s rights to access and use California’s navigable waters](#) from the [California State Lands Commission](#)

**9. Committee & Community Project Reports**

Discussion  Possible Action

Written reports are included for review. Committee chair or delegate may briefly highlight parts of the update, respond to councilmember questions, and receive public comment.

A. Community Stewardship Project

**10. Adjournment**



Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council  
Minutes

Regular Meeting

July 11, 2024 05:30 PM

Fife Creek Commons Community Room - 16376 5th Street, Guerneville, CA 95446

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/lrrmac>

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 pm by Chair & Rio Nido Representative: Pip Marquez de la Plata.

**A. Pledge of Allegiance**

Led by Monte Rio / Villa Grande Representative: Cynthia Strecker

**B. Roll Call**

Present: Chair & Rio Nido Representative: Pip Marquez de la Plata, Vice Chair & Cazadero / Duncan Mills Representative: Mike Nicholls, Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke, Monte Rio / Villa Grande Representative: Cynthia Strecker, Hacienda Representative: Vicki Clewes, Forestville Representative: Lonnie Lazar, Forestville Alternate Lisa Nahmanson, Guerneville Alternate Kathy Dahl

Absent: Guerneville Representative: Joe Rogoff, Guerneville Representative: Spencer R. Scott, Forestville Representative: Thai Hilton

- 2. Approval of Agenda** Vice Chair & Cazadero / Duncan Mills Representative: Mike Nicholls motioned to approve. A second was made by Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke.

The motion passed with the following vote:

8 **In Favor**   0 **Opposed**  
   **Abstained**      **Absent**      **Recused**

**3. Statement of Conflict of Interest**

**4. Consent Agenda**

**A. June 13 Minutes**

Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke motioned to approve. A second was made by Monte Rio / Villa Grande Representative: Cynthia Strecker.

The motion passed with the following vote:

8 **In Favor**   0 **Opposed**  
   **Abstained**      **Absent**      **Recused**

**5. Councilmember comment on matters not listed on the agenda**

Cynthia Strecker reported that Rio Fest was a big success with over 1,200 attendees. Lisa Nahmanson reported that Bike Friendly Forestville is meeting the 3rd Wednesday of each month and they would like to come share with the MAC about their work.

## 6. Public Comments

Vesta Copestakes shared that she, along with the Russian Riverkeeper Clean Team cleaned up a great deal of trash left over the holiday weekend. She also mentioned that the mowing and ditch cleaning has been going great, but to be aware that it's important to get the trash cleaned up before the mowing occurs so that plastics don't get chopped up in the process.

Lonnie Lazar, Forestville Representative, joining through Zoom, reported that he got stuck in traffic returning from San Francisco and won't be able to attend the meeting in person, but will attend virtually as a member of the public.

## 7. County Update from Supervisor Lynda Hopkins / Staff

Supervisor Hopkins, joining the meeting via Zoom, apologized for not attending in person. She planned to bring her 5-year-old, who developed a fever of 101 degrees, so she decided to stay home and participate remotely. She thanked everyone for their flexibility.

Supervisor Hopkins provided an update on the Local Coastal Plan. Despite this being the Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council, there are river areas within the local coastal zone. On Thursday, the 18th, at Sea Ranch and via Zoom, there will be a formal update on the Local Coastal Plan from the project lead, Cecily Condon. She met with Permit Sonoma Director Tennis Wick and Scott Orr, his right-hand man for planning. A Coastal Commission meeting in Sonoma County is anticipated in November to consider the Local Coastal Plan.

Feedback has been received about the proposed change on next week's Board of Supervisors agenda regarding the Park Rangers' status change from peace officers to public officers. Illegal flyers in local parks contain misinformation about this change. The proposal aims to change their status to public officers, better reflecting their roles in education, information, safety, and issuing administrative citations and arrests for misdemeanors. Their powers will remain unchanged. This change is intended to facilitate a collaborative partnership with the Sheriff's Office, including hiring four new sheriff's deputies and a sergeant to enhance law enforcement in regional parks. Currently, there is no local peace officer training for Park Rangers, leading to a 45% vacancy rate. The new training for public officers includes over 300 hours covering emergency medical response, strategic communications, de-escalation tactics, safety, and public safety coordination. Public officers will assist with evacuations, enter disaster areas, and issue citations and arrests. Peace officers would call deputies if situations escalated, as they did not carry guns or were part of the 911 dispatch system. The locally available public officer training should help reduce the 45% vacancy rate.

A dispute between IOLERO's and the Sheriff's attorneys over Measure P will go to a judge for determination. Supervisor Hopkins, not being an attorney, offered to answer any questions to the best of her ability.

The Board of Supervisors decided, by a 4-1 vote, to modify the language for the Measure J ballot question to ensure accuracy. Language about water quality and animal welfare was removed as the measure does not explicitly regulate these areas. This decision was made to comply with the code requiring ballot questions to be factual.

Cynthia Strecker inquired about the status of the bridge over Dutch Bill Creek. Staff is

investigating the status of the repairs to this critical piece of infrastructure.

Supervisor Hopkins met with Sebastopol city council members, the city manager, and new consultants about an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD). This partnership with Sebastopol will explore different boundaries, potentially including the lower Russian River. This financing method would allow reinvestment into local communities. They are in the preliminary stages, and major project suggestions are welcome via email or during Q&A.

Regarding seasonal bridges, such as the one at Vacation Beach, there is ongoing investigation into making them permanent. This process will take time for financing and permitting. Keeping these bridges up longer supports evacuation during fire season, but managing them can be challenging due to environmental regulations.

During public comment, Vikki Miller inquired about the removal of water quality and animal welfare language from the Measure J ballot question. She asked who oversees animal welfare on larger farms that might be impacted. Supervisor Hopkins explained that the measure focuses on the size of farms and closing certain farms, not on water quality or animal welfare. The ballot question needed to be an accurate summary without speculative or misleading language, so the original language implying benefits not specifically addressed by the measure was removed to ensure clarity and compliance with election code. She further clarified that animal services investigate alleged animal abuse cases, and actions can be escalated to the district attorney if needed. California has stringent regulations from a statewide ballot initiative mandating minimum enclosure size for livestock.

Field Representative Debbie Ramirez shared a staff update regarding applicant recruitment for MAC terms beginning in January 2025. A draft of the flyer was shared and she noted that the application period would run through August 31 and that the community selection process would run through September, wrapping up in mid-October.

Also, Debbie will be sending a survey out to all MAC reps and alternates to get feedback about increasing attendance at future emergency preparedness events.

## **8. Discussion regarding Pavement Preservation Program timeline and process**

Janet Thompson, Deputy Director at Sonoma County Public Infrastructure, began by expressing gratitude for the air-conditioned room provided for the meeting. She provided an overview of the county's paving program, emphasizing the substantial support from the Board of Supervisors, which allocates a significant portion of the general fund to the program. She clarified that the gas tax contributes less than 10% of the funding, with the majority coming from the general fund (50%), state Proposition Senate Bill 1 (SB1) (25%), and various other sources.

Thompson detailed that the county maintains 1,368 miles of road, 41% of which are in District 5. A two-year paving program is in place, with roads selected based on multiple factors and approved by the Board of Supervisors. Roads are evaluated biennially using the Pavement Condition Index (PCI), and data is managed with Street Saver software. The long-term road plan, approved in 2014, prioritizes roads based on traffic volume, community services, bike lanes, tourism, and functional classification.

During the Q&A session, several issues and concerns were addressed:

Council Member Mike Nicholls asked about the inclusion of evacuation routes in road prioritization. Thompson acknowledged that while evacuation routes are considered, they are challenging to define due to unpredictable disaster locations. Higher-volume roads are generally

prioritized, with community needs taken into account by the Board of Supervisors.

Council Member Mike Nicholls asked about bridge deck repairs, specifically a missed bridge in Cazadero. Thompson assured that they would look into patching the deep potholes with resin concrete as a permanent solution.

Council Member Vicki Clewes asked about traffic volume quantification, particularly on River Drive near County Park. Thompson explained that traffic to parks and beaches falls under tourism priorities, receiving extra attention.

Council Member Lisa Nahmanson asked how to get roads that don't score high on the paving list. Thompson recommended using SoCo Connect for maintenance issues and emailing the Supervisor's office for paving requests.

Council Member Lisa Nahmanson inquired about the interplay with Caltrans. Thompson clarified that the county does not have jurisdiction over Caltrans roads and directed to contact Caltrans directly for maintenance issues.

Council Member Betsy Van Dyke reported a clogged culvert on Neeley Road. Thompson advised emailing her or the Supervisor's office for further assistance.

Council Member Betsy Van Dyke mentioned plastic markers left by the Argonaut crew. Thompson instructed to contact her office to ensure the contractor cleans up.

Council Member Cynthia Strecker asked about checking if their road is on the paving list. Thompson stated that the list is approved biennially, with the next approval in Spring 2025. Updates can be obtained from the Supervisor's office.

A Public Commenter appreciated the recent reconstruction on Neeley Road but raised concerns about side roads used for equipment storage. Thompson recommended reporting issues through SoCo Connect and the Supervisor's office.

Public Commenter Marsee from Rio Nido noted frequent flooding and incorrect information on the Street Saver map. Thompson advised emailing her office to re-evaluate those roads.

A Public Commenter expressed safety concerns about the road between Mirabel and Steelhead Beach due to high traffic and vegetation overgrowth. Thompson acknowledged the issue and promised to look into clearing vegetation and addressing parking concerns for safety.

Thompson concluded by inviting further comments and questions via email.

## **9. Committee & Community Project Reports**

### **A. Guerneville Plaza Infrastructure Recommendations Ad Hoc - Final Report**

Reports were included in the packet. The Guerneville Plaza project is moving into the design phase now and the Ad Hoc work is complete.

### **B. Community Stewardship Project**

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by the chair at 6:44 PM



August 8, 2024

Supervisor Lynda Hopkins  
County of Sonoma  
575 Administration Drive, Room 100 A  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

RE: 2023 Annual Report

Dear Supervisor Hopkins,

The Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council (LRRMAC) had a productive and eventful year, actively engaging the community and addressing numerous issues. This annual report summarizes the council's key activities, discussions, and decisions over the past year. Throughout the year, LRRMAC remained dedicated to addressing the concerns of the Lower Russian River community. Through regular monthly meetings, community engagement, and collaboration with local and state officials, the council worked diligently to improve the quality of life for residents.

February 16, 2023: Roads Update

- Officer elections were conducted, with Pip Marquez de la Plata elected as Chair and Lisa Nahmanson as Vice Chair.
- Discussions included updates on road repairs and paving in the Lower Russian River area, the Moscow Rd. project, and the Forestville Front Street sidewalk project.
- The Community Clean Up Ad Hoc committee provided updates on connecting with more groups for clean-up events.
- Introductions and Oath of Office for new council representatives and alternates.

March 22, 2023: Vacation Rentals & Rural Broadband

- Public comments emphasized the importance of public involvement and the need for hybrid meeting technology.
- Supervisor Lynda Hopkins discussed the housing element, road funding issues, and updates on emergency financial assistance following January storms.
- Updates on the vacation rental ordinance and rural broadband were provided.
- The Communications Ad Hoc committee outlined goals for facilitating access to MAC meetings and increasing awareness in the community.

April 13, 2023: Resource Guide for Municipal Issues: Who to call

- Formation of an Ad Hoc Committee to develop a River MAC Land Acknowledgment.
- The Communications Ad Hoc committee proposed three initiatives, including designating Summer 2023 as LRRMAC Awareness Summer and committing to participation at local farmers markets.
- Updates on the governance study

May 11, 2023: IOLERO & Fire Season Readiness

- Public comments addressed issues related to the Russian River Sanitation District rate increase, homeless encampments, and code enforcement.
- Supervisor Hopkins provided updates on the Local Coastal Plan, housing element, wastewater regulations, and various county initiatives.

June 9, 2023: SocoConnect

- Public comments highlighted concerns about local infrastructure and public safety.
- Discussions on the summer outreach initiatives and participation in local events to increase community engagement.

July 13, 2023: Decommissioning of Potter Valley Dam

- The council discussed amendments to the bylaws and the importance of effective communication with the community.
- The Communications Ad Hoc committee outlined plans for outreach at local farmers markets and other community events.

August 24, 2023: Joint meeting with Coast MAC | Town Hall with Senator Mike McGuire

- The councils approved bylaws amendments

September 14, 2023: Overview of Scoping for Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR) for Canyon Rock Asphalt Facility

October 12, 2023: PG & E Presentation on Unscheduled Power Outages & More

November 9, 2023: Presentation on Firewise Communities

**Ad Hoc Committees**

The Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council (LRRMAC) established several ad hoc committees in 2023 to address specific community issues and initiatives. These committees were instrumental in fostering community engagement, addressing local concerns, and advancing the council's objectives. Each ad hoc committee's efforts and achievements are detailed below. These ad hoc committees have made significant contributions to the community through targeted initiatives and active



engagement. The council extends its gratitude to all members and volunteers who contributed to these successes.

#### Land Acknowledgement Ad Hoc Committee

Chair: Lisa Nahmanson

Members: Vicki Clewes, Patty Thayer

#### Objectives:

- Educate on the purpose and impact of land acknowledgements.
- Coordinate with county legal and NGO resources.
- Connect with local tribes and MACs to broaden committee membership.

#### Results:

- Met periodically to discuss strategies and actions.
- Initiated outreach to the Coastal MAC to include members from the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians.
- Continued efforts to engage local tribes through organizations like the Redbud Resource Group and Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods.

#### Community Clean Up Ad Hoc Committee

Chair: Lisa Nahmanson

Members: Vesta Copestakes, Vicki Clewes, Carol Shumate, Lupe Catalan, Debbie Ramirez

#### Objectives:

- Collaborate with District 5 staff and the Communications Ad Hoc to develop community clean-up resources.
- Add clean-up guides in English and Spanish to the LRRMAC website.

#### Results:

- Created a "How to Do a Community Clean Up" document.
- Conducted clean-ups in several locations, including Downtown Forestville and the Guerneville Park and Ride.
- Secured county translations for documents.
- Acknowledged the support from various county departments and community volunteers.

#### Communications Ad Hoc Committee

Chair: Joe Rogoff

Members: Betsy Van Dyke, Patty Thayer, Vicki Clewes

#### 2023 Accomplishments:

- Met monthly and attended 24 community events to enhance engagement.
- Developed a banner and equipment kit for tabling at events.
- Created an events calendar and a community organization contact spreadsheet.
- Introduced bilingual informational materials and added a community engagement requirement to MAC job descriptions.

#### Recommended 2024 Goals:

- Increase media coverage and connect more with the Spanish-speaking community.
- Continue event engagement and expand geographically.
- Engage all MAC members in community outreach.
- Finalize budget and design for MAC promotional items.

Land Use Standing Committee

Chair: Michael Nicholls

Activities:

- Addressed land use issues, including Moscow Road repairs and housing developments.
- Facilitated public input on significant projects such as the Guerneville Park Hotel and the Housing Element Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

Challenges:

- Managed truncated notifications and scheduling constraints to comply with the Brown Act.
- Worked to consolidate feedback from multiple stakeholders and coordinate timely responses to Permit Sonoma.

**2023 MAC Membership included the following Representatives:**

**Vesta Copestakes**

Forestville

**Lisa Nahmanson**

Forestville

**Joe Rogoff**

Guerneville

**Nic Pereira**

Guerneville

**Betsy Van Dyke**

Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon

**Cynthia Strecker**

Monte Rio / Villa Grande

**Mike Nicholls**

Cazadero / Duncans Mills

**Vicki Clewes**

Hacienda

**Pip Marquez de la Plata**

Rio Nido

**And Alternates:**

**Lucy Hardcastle**

Forestville

**Brian Andriola**

Hacienda (start: 11/28)

**Kathleen Dahl**

Guerneville

**Patty Thayer**

Monte Rio / Villa Grande

**Tony Goodwin**

Cazadero / Duncans Mills

**Jenn Otten**

Rio Nido (start: 7/11)

**Greg Hennig**

Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon

The Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council has had a productive year filled with meaningful community engagement. The council's commitment to addressing local issues through collaborative efforts and active participation has resulted in positive outcomes for the Lower Russian River community. The establishment and successes of various ad hoc committees, the involvement of dedicated representatives and alternates, and the ongoing dialogue with local and state officials underscore the

council's dedication to enhancing the quality of life for residents. We look forward to continuing this momentum in the current year and remain steadfast in our mission to serve and support our community. Thank you for your continued support and guidance.

Sincerely,

Pip Marquez de la Plata,  
Chair  
Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council

August 8 Community Stewardship Project Report  
Mirabel Park and Ride to Steelhead Beach:  
Clearing the Westbound Lane for Safer Walking  
July 17, 2024

Cross to Westbound Lane of River Road from Mirabel Park and Ride here. "How about a crosswalk"? says Vesta





Here's a bus stop. Sit down and take a break now that you made it across River Road. How about clearing all of that brush around the bus stop? It's Fire season!!!





Here is a turn lane on River Road just west of Mirabel. It could be widened if the high weeds were whacked. Let's coordinate with the high weed mowing crew, pick up trash before they come by and then also sweep all of the debris.













Look how much debris is blocking the actual River Road!!! That is almost 2 feet of road that is covered up. The width of a person wearing an innertube.





Here's where it gets even more dicey!! Mile marker 17.48  
Narrow and Dangerous!





At the mile 17.33 no parking sign:

There is a section with a ton of Poison Oak where beach-goers might move back into the road to avoid it. By the way: who maintains that pretty sign?









One individual for scale and this is wednesday at 10:30 so no crowds!! Imagine if this were a weekend!!





If this were cleared there would be more walking space:





What is County's responsibility to clear debris from guardrail to property line of individual (to the north-ish)?





And while we are at it, can we add a center turn lane here on River Road at Steelhead/Trenton?  
We witnessed a doozy of a near accident.



Thank you for listening.