

## The Valley Housing Crisis ----and Some Solutions

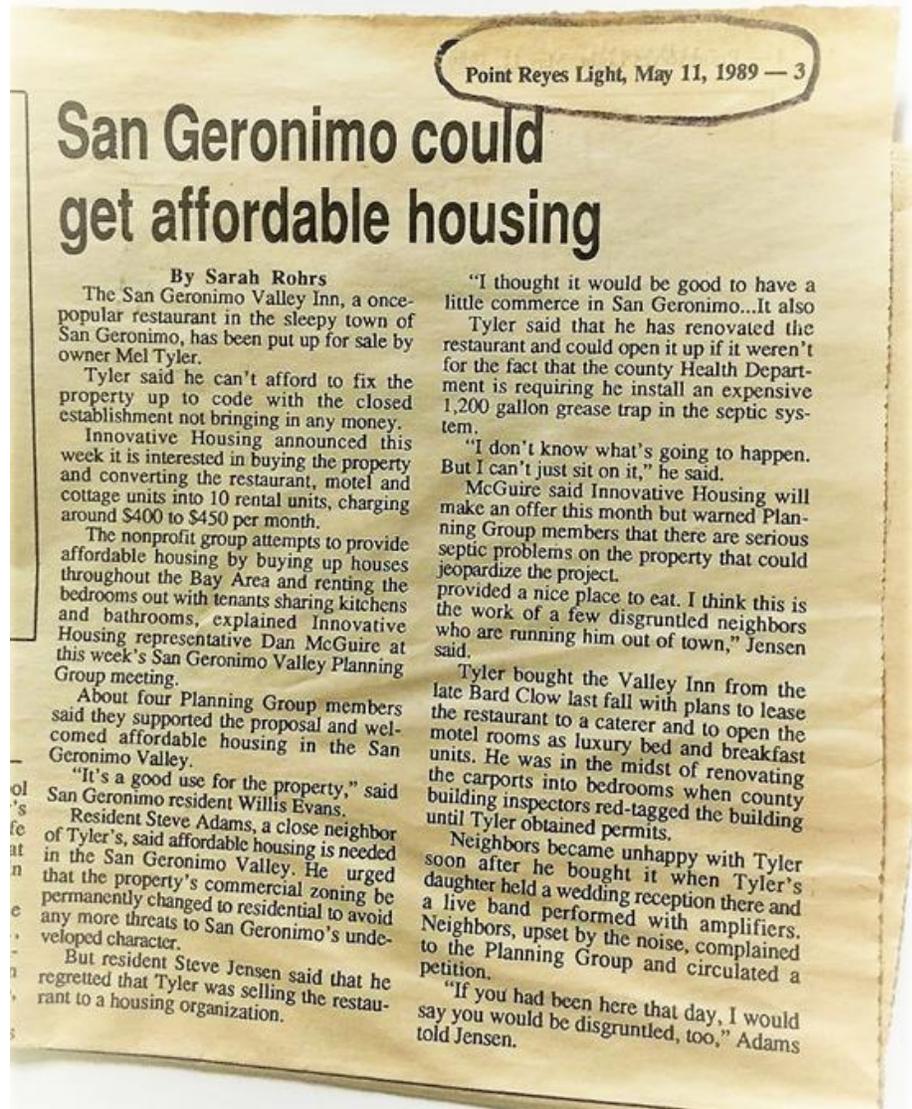
At a recent meeting in Point Reyes Station, Supervisor Dennis Rodoni handed us this clipping from 1989 from the Light. As you see, the housing problem in the Valley is not new. What is new is that we now have a crisis that is affecting the culture and well-being of our community. There is a shortage of permanent community housing for young families, for older couples, for single adults of all ages, for working people, artists and musicians – the people who make the Valley the extraordinary community that we love and cherish.

### Here are some facts:

- The population of the San Geronimo Valley grew by 500 people between 1980 and 2000. But it has remained relatively unchanged since then. According to the most recent American Community Survey data, 3700 people live in the Valley
- The average age of our population has changed: Since 1990 the number of young children, ages 0-5 years in the Valley has dropped by one-third. Our school enrollment has dropped significantly.
- But the population of senior adults, 65 years of age and older has quadrupled.
- There are 1,776 homes in the Valley, 35% of our houses are more than 75 years old. 89% of Valley were built before 1990. Census Bureau reports show that there were no new homes built in the past two decades.
- More than 90% of Valley homes are single family units. 42% of Valley houses have 3 or more bedrooms. 19% of Valley dwellings are just 1 or 2 rooms.
- Monthly rents in 2015 averaged \$1,482 in the Valley, 43% of Valley renters were paying more than 1/3 of their monthly household income for rent. The Census Bureau has recorded a zero vacancy rate for rentals in the Valley.

The housing problem is complex and there is not just one solution. It is a problem that needs to be addressed on many levels taking into consideration social, economic and political factors. The County of Marin and various housing organizations are working on a variety of measures. In this Newsletter we are presenting information on a few of them:

- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Rental Housing Dispute Resolution
- Proposed Tax on Temporary Housing units



## Auxiliary Dwelling Units

Second Units including Junior Second Units offer the possibility of additional income for home-owners plus the additional benefit of additional permanent community housing. New California legislation and new Marin County policies and procedures now make it easier for homeowners to create second units. County funding may be available to homeowner to create affordable units.

### *Community Development Agency*

#### ***POLICY AND PROCEDURE***

### ***Accessory Dwelling Units***

This policy provides guidance on when review is required and/or the type of review for accessory dwelling units (previously referred to as residential second units) pursuant to State Law and recent amendments to the Development Code.

California law made it easier to create accessory dwelling units (ADU) as of January 1, 2017. Specific standards and requirements can be found in Marin County Code Section 22.32.120 and Chapter 22.56. The following table summarizes the applicability of review and/or the type of review for junior accessory dwelling units.

		<b>PLANNING</b>	<b>BUILDING &amp; SAFETY</b>	<b>EHS</b>	<b>DPW**</b>
<b>Junior Accessor Dwelling Units</b>	<b>NONCOASTAL</b>	Optional Certification	Express Permit	No Review	No Review
A type of accessory dwelling unit with a wetbar located entirely within a residence, with its own entrance, and limited to 500 square feet in size. Only one JADU is permitted per lot, and the owner shall maintain owner occupancy and file a deed restriction if seeking to voluntarily obtain JADU designation from the County .					
	<b>COASTAL ZONE</b>	No permit	Express Permit	No Review	No Review

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# Rental Housing Mediation Program

**The Rental Housing Dispute Resolution (RHDR) program applies to residential tenancies in the unincorporated areas of Marin County.** The program offers an opportunity for landlords and tenants to discuss issues related to rent increases and/or housing services reductions (such as loss of parking privileges) that create a net increase in monthly rent of more than 5% in a one-year period.

In mediation, a neutral third-party (a “mediator”) facilitates discussion between tenants and landlords with the goal of amicably settling a dispute. Mediation does not guarantee a reduction in any rent increase and tenants are required to pay all rent legally due to the landlord during the mediation process. Both landlords and tenants are required to participate fully in the mediation process. If a landlord does not participate in mediation in good faith, the rent increase or housing service reduction in question may be deemed invalid.

Landlords are required to provide tenants of their residential properties located in unincorporated Marin County with the [Notice of Tenant Rights\[PDF\]](#) **no later than February 10, 2018.** Landlords must also provide tenants with the Notice of Tenant Rights when renewing a rental agreement, when entering into a new rental agreement, and when providing notice of a rent increase and/or a housing service reduction. These notices and forms are provided below.

Questions about this ordinance? Please review the responses to these in our Frequently Asked Questions. Additional questions related to the ordinance may be directed to Debbi La Rue [dlarue@marincounty.org](mailto:dlarue@marincounty.org) or (415) 473-7309.

To request mandatory mediation services, complete the [Dispute Resolution Service Request form\[PDF\]](#) and submit it to the District Attorney’s Consumer Protection Unit at (415) 473-6495 or [consumer@marincounty.org](mailto:consumer@marincounty.org).

The Rental Housing Dispute Resolution program is a product of the Board of Supervisors Affordable Housing Workplan. To learn more about policies that are intended to preserve and expand on our affordable housing stock please see the County’s [Affordable Housing webpage](#).

**The Marin County Board of Supervisors may also soon be considering a Just Cause Eviction Ordinance as an additional renter protection measure. Stay tuned.**

*[This article originally appeared in the Point Reyes Light in January and is being reprinted with their permission.]*

## **West Marin’s visitation impacts: Transient Occupancy Tax proposal Opinion**

**By Supervisor Dennis Rodoni**

West Marin’s natural beauty and historical attractions draw many visitors to the area. Every year West Marin’s popularity has continued to grow, and with it, an influx of visitors. Although tourism is part of our history and vital to our economy, the reality is that tourism is stressing county resources and, from what I’ve heard, negatively impacting many West Marin residents. During my campaign in 2016, at our community office hours, at meetings and one-on-ones throughout District 4 last year and at Senator Mike McGuire’s 2017 community forum and working group meetings, I have consistently heard that more needs to be done to assure that our communities remain vibrant with sustainable schools, employee housing and adequate services for both residents and visitors.

Setting accommodations aside for serving visitors affects available housing, which leads to a reduction in full-time residents and subsequent difficulty in finding and retaining employees for local businesses. Visitors also increase demands on county infrastructure—from overcrowded roads to overflowing toilets—and stress our already overburdened services, including trash clean-up, law enforcement, safety personnel and volunteer fire departments. Yet we also have an obligation to welcome visitors: the California Coastal Commission mandates that we provide accommodations for citizens visiting the seashore. To preserve our communities and their quality of life, we must find a balance between supporting our rural communities and welcoming and accommodating visitors.

Concurrently, the size of West Marin contributes to the stress on infrastructure and county services. West Marin is vast and expensive to maintain. It accounts for 89 percent of the county’s total geographic area for fire coverage, and 58 percent of fire calls originate in West Marin. Additionally, 47 percent of the total 421 miles of county-maintained roads are in West Marin.

To help mitigate the impacts of tourism, I propose a ballot measure to increase the Transient Occupancy Tax, or TOT, in West Marin. The TOT is a tax on those who rent accommodations for a period less than 30 days. The current rate in unincorporated Marin is 10 percent. It is important to note that the TOT is not a tax on the business operator; it is a tax on the tourist that is collected by the operator on behalf of the county. The

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*(Transit Occupancy Tax continued from previous page)*  
county generates on average \$3.4 million a year in TOT revenue, less than 1 percent of total general fund

revenue. West Marin, with the highest concentration of short-term rentals, generates approximately 75 percent of Marin's total TOT.

TOT funds go directly into the county's general fund, meaning there is no specific designated use of the funds. Similar to property tax, sales tax and business license revenues, TOT revenues fund a variety of county services, such as public parks, historical and environmental preservation and infrastructure improvements and maintenance. The TOT also supplements crucial services that our residents depend on, such as fire protection and local law enforcement. I propose a ballot measure that would increase in the TOT rate from 10 percent to 15 percent in West Marin only. Revenue from the additional 5 percent would not go into the general fund; instead, it would be held separately to benefit the "West Marin Tax Area." This newly proposed area would encompass Muir Beach to Dillon Beach, Nicasio to the top of Big Rock ranch, and the San Geronimo Valley to the top of White's Hill. Three-fifths of the 5 percent of the additional funds collected would be allocated for long-term affordable housing under the proposed measure. The remaining two-fifths of the additional funds would be allocated for fire and emergency services, split between the volunteer fire departments and the Marin County Fire Department for use in the West Marin Tax Area. In order to ensure local control, an advisory group consisting of West Marin residents, West Marin business leaders and county staff would monitor the distribution of funds. This proposed ballot measure would require a two-thirds majority vote, as it is a measure to increase tax. As your supervisor, it is my responsibility to find solutions to our communities' complex problems. I believe that this new funding stream would be a good start toward mitigating the negative visitor impacts on our West Marin communities. I recognize that it would not solve all of our issues, but with your help and collaboration, I am confident that we will find the other answers we need.

This TOT ballot measure is just in the planning stages. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas, not only regarding the TOT tax, but on the issue of visitor impacts at large. Please feel free to call me at (415) 473.7331 or email me at DRodoni@marincounty.org if you would like to discuss this or any other proposal.

*Dennis Rodoni, a former contractor, has served as District 4 county supervisor since January 2017 and prior to that as a board member North Marin Water District. He lives in Olema.*

The Board and Staff of SGVAHA along with many members of the Valley community honor the memory of William Blanton who passed away on January 18, 2018. Bill was long-term Board member and affordable housing advocate. He was a mentor and guide to those of us who joined the affordable housing board in recent years. We will miss him.

## And What About the Golf Course?

Quite a lot of Valley folks are wondering about the future of the Golf Course. Many folks have mentioned the possibility of putting some housing on the property. What about a cluster of tiny houses? What about housing for County Parks employees and Firefighters? Let's keep thinking out of the box.

All too often, the people who have an agenda and are well-organized are the ones who are heard, while the rest of us sit back in wonder, trying to figure out how to have our thoughts heard before it's too late. I encourage us all not to wait, but to start writing to the Board of Supervisors, the Community Development Agency and the Parks Department and let them know what we would like to see happen at the golf course property.

The county will facilitate a community process in which we will all have an opportunity to meet and speak about what we would like to see happen. We need to show up and be heard. And we need to show up and listen.

**For more information we invite you to contact us**



**Call: 415-488-4890**

**E-mail: [info@sgvaha.org](mailto:info@sgvaha.org)**

**Visit: [www.sgvaha.org](http://www.sgvaha.org)**