

Voters should OK Brentwood open space protection



Development of the Shadow Lakes Golf Club in Brentwood would require voter approval under Measure Q on the Nov. 8 ballot. DOUG DURAN — STAFF ARCHIVES

In the past three decades, the population of Brentwood increased about ninefold, from a city of 7,500 people in 1990 to 67,000 today.

As the city kept permitting more housing construction, it was falling short of its general-plan targets for neighborhood and community parks to serve its residents. Meanwhile, plans have been floated to turn golf courses into developments, which would further erode the city's open space.

Seeing this, a group of residents proposed a simple measure: Protect open space by requiring city voters' approval for future development of land currently designated in the general plan as parks, open spaces or recreational facilities open to the public.

The City Council voted unanimously to place the issue on the Nov. 8 ballot. Measure Q would protect 175 parcels totaling 1,048 acres and remain in effect for 40 years. It's a smart, simple idea that would help shield the city from the disproportionate influence developers held for so many years. Voters should back Measure Q.

The measure would protect 362 acres designated as parks in the city's general plan, 77 acres designated as permanent open space, and 609 acres that covers three golf courses — Deer Ridge (now closed), Shadow Lakes and the Brentwood Golf Club.

Under Measure Q, the City Council could permit only development on the protected land without voter approval if necessary to comply with state or federal law or if the land is government owned and to be used for a public purpose.

In the latter case, the council would, in turn, have to protect an equal or greater amount of open space elsewhere.

Measure Q is similar to a citizens' initiative Martinez voters passed in 2018. But there's a big political difference: In Martinez, the initiative backers had to collect signatures to qualify the measure for the ballot, and then the City Council tried unsuccessfully to undermine it by placing a sham, competing measure on the same ballot.

In sharp contrast, the Brentwood City Council members this year embraced the idea and placed it directly on the ballot, saving the residents from having to go through the signature-gathering process. It's a sign of the monumental political shift over the past two election cycles that has transformed the City Council.

For years, past members of the Brentwood City Council seemed to live by the mantra, as one council candidate put it, "If we build it, they will come." The city kept permitting more housing construction with the hope that enough major employers would follow to hire those new residents. It hasn't happened, and it probably never will.

Four of the five new council members campaigned with a clear message that that strategy won't work. They recognize that they can't keep plastering the city with more homes and few jobs — that the result would be even more traffic gridlock along Highway 4.

And they recognize that the remaining open space must be protected. Measure Q would provide a critical backstop to ensure that voters have a voice on whether parklands and golf courses are turned into housing sites.

Station 74 in Pinole could reopen in March 2023



Pinole Valley Fire Station 74, 3700 Pinole Valley Road (via Google Maps) - October 12, 2022

Fire Station 74 in Pinole could reopen as soon as March 1, 2023, according to a [plan](#) that would also have Con Fire taking over fire services in the city.

This week, both the Pinole City Council and Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, which also serves as the governing board for the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (Con Fire), unanimously approved the proposal that would dissolve the Pinole Fire Department and have Con Fire operating both Station 73 (currently open) and Station 74. The plan now heads to Contra Costa LAFCO for final approval.

“This means medical and fire response will be faster in West County!,” Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia posted on [Facebook](#) in the wake of this week’s approvals.

Pinole has operated just one fire station — Station 73 — for most of the city’s history, only briefly operating Station 74 from 2003 until 2011. Since the closure of Station 74 due to the recession, the city has explored ways to reopen the station or otherwise expand fire protection and emergency medical services.

The proposal to reopen Station 74 and have Con Fire become the city’s fire service agency is anticipated to cost roughly \$7.5 million per year on average over the first seven years. Of that amount, \$2 million will come annually from County Measure X funds currently appropriated to the Pinole Fire Department.

Proponents of the plan in principle — which include the City’s Fire Chief, the County Executive Fire Chiefs, and the labor group representing Con Fire’s and Pinole Fire Department’s firefighters (IAFF Local 1230) — say the benefits will be measurable.

ConFire reported on [Facebook](#) that the new arrangement “will near overnight” improve fire and EMS services in Pinole. In addition to faster response times, a larger agency like Con Fire would enhance the city’s resources and provide services at a lower cost because it “achieves economies of scale and scope,” according to a city report.

Map: California updates tsunami hazard areas with most changes in the Bay Area

PUBLISHED: October 12, 2022 at 4:18 p.m. | UPDATED: October 13, 2022 at 4:20 a.m.

The California Geological Survey and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services released an update to the state's [tsunami hazard area](#) map, with the latest changes concentrated on seven counties — mostly in the Bay Area.

The designated area is primarily used to help cities and counties assess tsunami risk and develop plans to deal with the threat. However, the CGS does recommend that if you are on land and in the hazard area, you should leave immediately after feeling a long earthquake or if you receive an official evacuation notification.

The hazard areas were based from 2009 Tsunami Inundation Maps for Emergency Planning and improved high-resolution computer modeling of tsunami scenarios. The counties that saw updates Friday are Marin, Napa, San Diego, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma and Ventura.

The [last update](#) was in July 2021. The update accounts for 1,000-year historical tsunami events. Previous maps only calculated 100- to 500-year historical events.

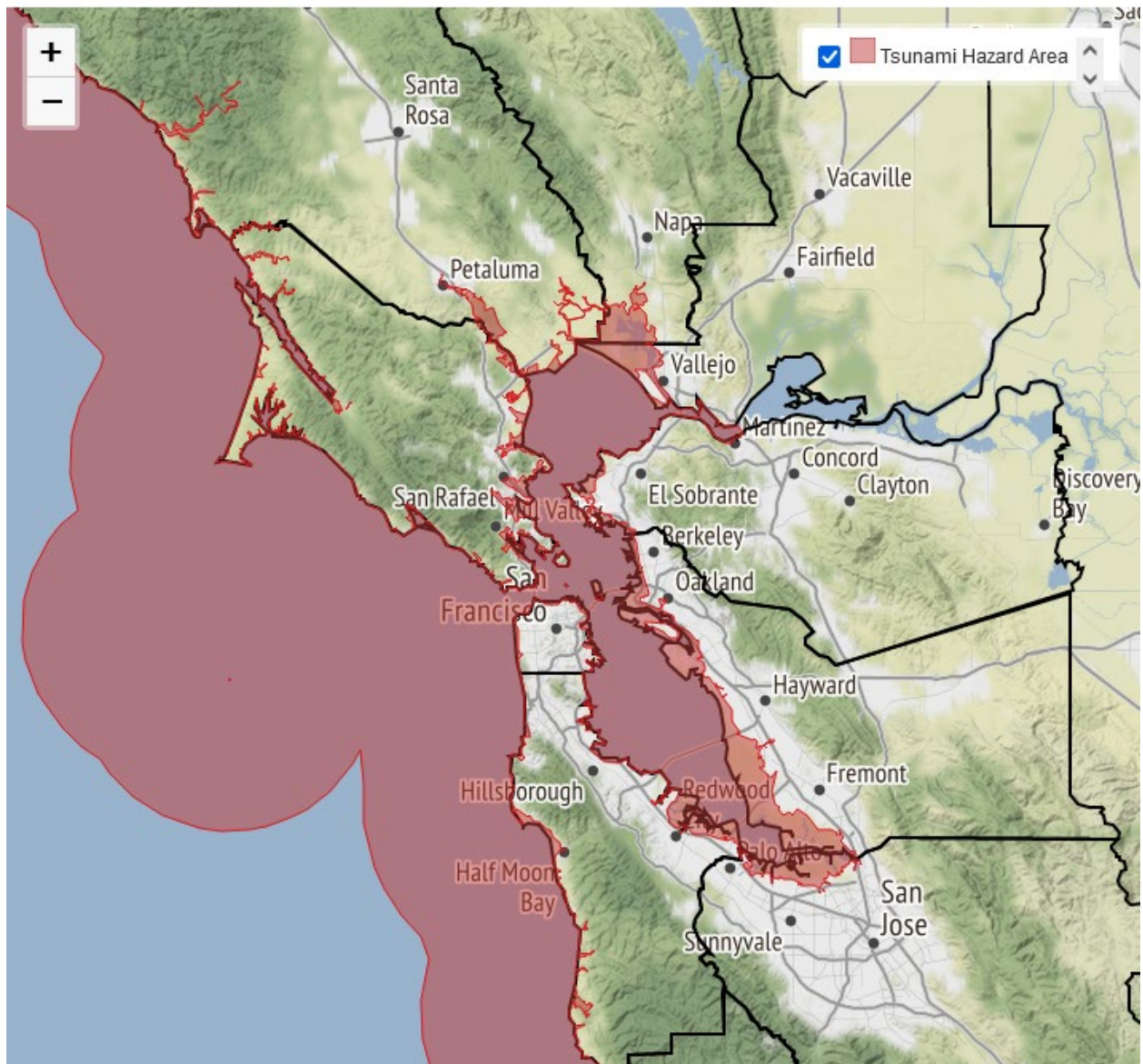
TSUNAMI HAZARD AREA IN CALIFORNIA

The California Geological Survey recently updated their tsunami hazard maps to designate areas at risk of inundation and help local agencies plan for evacuations. The state recommends those living in the red zone to leave the zone after an earthquake or tsunami warning.

TSUNAMI HAZARD AREA IN CALIFORNIA

Environment | Map: California updates tsunami h

Source: [California Geological Survey](#) | Map by Pai/Bay Area News Group



Fire Board, City Of Pinole Agree To Join Forces

Oct. 12, 2022

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District will likely annex Pinole and provide fire service, after the West County city and Con Fire's board of directors signed off on the move this week.

The Pinole City Council unanimously approved the move Monday night.

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, in its role as fire district board, approved the move Tuesday. Officially, it approved Con Fire applying to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), asking for its formal approval -- a process that can take months.

If approved, Con Fire would then enter an agreement with Pinole to provide service within its city limits and take over its two fire stations. Only one station is currently in operation -- downtown station 73 -- as station 74 on Pinole Valley Road was closed in 2011 for lack of funding. It would reopen under the new agreement.

The expanded service would be paid for by city and county funds. The first fiscal year, 2022/23, would cost \$7.5 million.

A county staff report said the county wants to get the application to LAFCO by Oct. 17 for consideration at its Nov. 9 meeting. The report says it's possible for the stations to be up and running as part of Con Fire by March 1, 2023. Contra Costa has already negotiated union agreements to keep the station 73 firefighters employed.

The move would be just the latest in a year of big expansion for Con Fire. In July, the district finalized much-anticipated consolidation with the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District becomes official Friday.

The consolidation brought 128,000 residents of East Contra Costa under the purview of the larger district and was expected to improve and streamline service. The district now serves 753,000 county residents. The consolidation expanded Con Fire geographically from 304 to 553 square miles, an increase of 82 percent.

The district has also opened, or reopened, stations in unincorporated Walnut Creek, Oakley and Bay Point. Planning for construction of two additional fire stations in the city of Brentwood is currently underway, with completion date estimates some time in 2024.

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'Preserve open land': Alameda County to vote on amended Measure D



Discussion continues surrounding Measure D, which is aimed at increasing agriculture businesses' profits while also preserving open space.

This November, Alameda County voters will once again vote on Measure D, or the “Save Agriculture and Open Space Lands” initiative, this time with amendments aimed at increasing profits for agriculture business while simultaneously preserving the county’s open land.

The proposed amendments come from the Alameda County Local Agency Formation Commission, or LAFCo, to allow equestrian centers, greenhouses and wineries more flexibility in their building plans.

Due to the industries in the valley voicing their concerns, LAFCo issued a report on the effects the measure has had in the region throughout the past 20 years, according to a report by the Alameda County Community Development Agency’s planning department. It discovered that while the industries are stable, the current floor aspect ratio is too limiting and has resulted in stagnation.

According to Victor Flores, a climate resilience manager for the East Bay Greenbelt Alliance, the measure was originally approved in 2000 to establish an “Urban Growth Boundary,” an area delineated to preserve open, undeveloped or agricultural land from urban sprawl specifically in the tri-valley region, which encompasses the natural regions of Danville, Dublin, Livermore and Pleasanton.

The purpose of Measure D is to “to preserve and enhance agriculture and agricultural lands, and to protect the natural qualities, the wildlife habitats, the watersheds and the beautiful open space of Alameda County from excessive, badly located and harmful development,” according to the Alameda County Community Development Agency’s planning department.

However, since the measure’s passing, the agricultural and equestrian communities of Alameda County argue that the strict square footage limitations hinder their business performance.

“What we worry about in general is just the fact that if these industries don’t succeed, there’s a lot of market pressure to convert land, especially ‘greenfield developments’ into more sprawling, suburban development, which is horrible for the environment,” Flores said.

If the amended measure passes, the maximum floor area ratio for agricultural buildings in Large Parcel Agriculture areas will be increased from .01 to .025 and equestrian riding areas will be able to build covered structures to a maximum of 60,000 square feet, which will allow for more space for large events, thereby increasing revenue, according to Flores.

Flores noted that the largest supporters of the measure are industry advocates and the Tri-Valley Conservancy, a land trust aimed at preserving and advocating for the open spaces in the East Bay. According to Flores, there does not seem to be many who oppose the measure as the amendments will likely not be “super drastic.”

Flores noted that though Berkeley residents can vote on the measure, it will not impact them directly. In fact, he said it will likely only affect Livermore residents who live or work in the valley itself.