

LOCAL NEWS

Marin projects allocated \$2.53M in state budget



The state budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year includes \$1 million for a playground project at Golden Gate Village in Marin City. (Alan Dep/Marin Independent Journal)

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The 2023-24 state budget has more than \$11 million carved out for projects and programs throughout the North Bay, including \$2.5 million for Marin, Assemblymember Damon Connolly said.

“Even during a constrained budget year, we were able to bring back significant investments to Marin and Sonoma that will help improve community parks, strengthen our wildfire response efforts and public transportation systems, and expand educational programs in the district,” said Connolly, a Democrat from San Rafael who sits on the Budget Committee. “I look forward to seeing the amazing benefits these investments will have in our community.”

The allocations for Marin include \$1 million to support the construction of the College of Marin science field station in Bolinas. The \$5.4 million research and education [center](#) will rise at the site of the former marine laboratory and field station at the Bolinas Lagoon that was shuttered in 2005.

Keith Rosenthal, the school’s director of advancement, said that when the project is completed, College of Marin will be one of only two community colleges in the state with coastal field stations. Mendocino College has one near Point Arena, he said. Rosenthal said the college is grateful for Connolly’s efforts.

“The impact of this is going to be huge, it’s amazing,” Rosenthal said. “It’s going to be generational in terms of what we’re going to be able to do there for the students and the community.”

In 2021, the old complex was demolished and design permits and approval processes at the state and county levels accelerated. Final county and state permits and approvals were issued on Jan. 5, the college said. The groundbreaking for the project is set for July 21, with construction expected to wrap up in the fall of 2024.

Another \$1 million allocation in the state budget is for the playground renovation at the Golden Gate Village housing complex in Marin City.

Kimberly Carroll, executive director of the Marin Housing Authority, said staff will work with the neighborhood’s resident council and historical consultant to create the design.

The state budget also allots \$530,000 for the volunteer fire stations in western Marin. The funding will be used to acquire medical equipment such as automatic electronic defibrillators and chest compression devices for resuscitation, said Deputy Chief Chris Martinelli of the Marin County Fire Department.

The Stinson Beach Volunteer Fire Department will purchase a new ambulance as well, Martinelli said.

“All of West Marin is only about 16,000 people, but there are a lot of tourists,” Martinelli said. “We had 18.7 million visitors in 2022 alone.”

“So there isn’t a significant taxpayer revenue for emergency services, but we have a lot of day visitors and EMS calls are our most common,” Martinelli said, referring to emergency medical services. “This is huge to support that and fill that gap.”

For Sonoma County, the allocations include \$2 million for an affordable housing development in Santa Rosa; \$1.5 million for Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit for a three-year airport transfer program; and \$1 million to help the Sonoma County Fire District purchase wildland firefighting equipment.

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