



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

July 2, 2014

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Garrett Toy, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Adoption of a resolution supporting and endorsing a proposed County of Marin parcel tax as the funding mechanism for the second generation Marin Emergency Radio Authority public safety communications system

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution supporting and endorsing a proposed County of Marin parcel tax as the funding mechanism for the second generation Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) public safety communications system.

DISCUSSION

At its June 4th meeting, the Council discussed this request from Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA). The Council continued the item to allow MERA time to respond to questions raised by the Council at the meeting. Attached is MERA's response.

As background, attached is a staff report from MERA describing the need and costs to upgrade the current communication system (Gen I). This need is based on reliability, capacity, coverage, and compliance with FCC requirements. MERA indicates that the Gen I system is approaching a time in which they will not be able to sustain the system and it will need to be replaced. To meet their "go-live" target of 2018, the replacement project needs to begin in 2015 with a secured funding source.

The proposed financing source is a county-wide parcel tax on residential and commercial properties with single family homes paying \$29 per year. MERA is requesting that each MERA member agency pass a resolution to support and endorse the proposed MERA Parcel Tax. The attached resolution is being provided to each MERA member agency with the intent that all of the resolutions will be provided to the Marin County Board of Supervisors as MERA seeks to have the Parcel Tax placed on the November 2014 ballot.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Town currently pays both the financing and annual operating and maintenance (O&M) costs for the Gen I system (approx. \$80,000 in FY13-14). MERA's parcel tax proposal would transfer the financing costs for the new system to property owners. However, the Town would continue to cover the annual O&M costs. If the parcel tax fails, the new system would need to be financed by the member agencies which would cost the Town approximately \$44,000 more annually from FY 15/16 thru FY 20/21 and \$88,000 more from FY 21/22 through FY 35/36. This would be in addition to the annual O&M costs and the financing of the Gen I debt service through FY20/21.

ATTACHMENTS

MERA staff report
Resolution

AGENDA ITEM # 1

RECEIVED

JUN 16 2014

TOWN OF FAIRFAX

MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District

95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945

PHONE: (415) 878-2690 FAX: (415) 878-2660

WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG

DATE: June 13, 2014
TO: Garrett Toy, Fairfax Town Manager
FROM: Dave Jeffries, Special Project Manager
SUBJECT: Response to Questions from MERA Council Presentations

My thanks to you and the Town Council for the opportunity to meet with them last week. I have looked into two items involving the potential of leasing and the concern about the life of the technology that were asked at that meeting and wanted to provide my response to you to share with the Council.

As to the Leasing question, MERA is aware of and has discussed leasing as an option. In preliminary discussions with potential vendors in 2011, two vendors were asked if they would provide a leasing option. One agreed and the other declined. While it is currently MERA's intent to purchase a new system, there is no language in the proposed ballot measure that would preclude MERA from seeking lease proposals from potential vendors and pursuing a lease solution if that were determined by the MERA Governing Board to be the better solution for MERA. As a reminder, the MERA Governing Board consists of one member each from the 25 member agencies, including Fairfax. Even with a lease option, MERA would need to develop a revenue stream to pay the lease payments.

As to the Technological Obsolescence question, MERA is acutely aware of this concern and some of those involved in this project recall the delays that MERA dealt with in implementing the Gen I system. As we intend, as a foundation, to utilize existing sites, we believe we are at less risk of the land use delays that impacted us before. In addition, with the current project staff and both Executive and Governing Board members being aware of this concern, we certainly anticipate addressing this concern in vendor selection and in developing a final contract. In addition, the Service Upgrade Agreement (SUA) that was mentioned in our staff report is another tool we will be pursuing in order to mitigate against this risk.

If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

RESOLUTION 14-__

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFAX
SUPPORTING AND ENDORSING THE LEVY OF A PARCEL TAX
TO FINANCE A NEW COUNTYWIDE
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM**

Whereas, public safety and emergency radio communications are vital to our first responders and the communities they serve; and public safety and emergency radio communications in our jurisdiction are currently provided by our membership in the Marin Emergency Radio Authority; and

Whereas, the Marin Emergency Radio Authority is a joint exercise of powers agency comprised of the City of Belvedere, Bolinas Fire Protection District, Town of Corte Madera, Town of Fairfax, Inverness Public Utility District, Kentfield Fire Protection District, City of Larkspur, County of Marin, Marin Community College District, Marinwood Community Services District, City of Mill Valley, Novato Fire Protection District, City of Novato, Town of Ross, Ross Valley Fire Department, Town of San Anselmo, City of San Rafael, City of Sausalito, Southern Marin Fire District, Town of Tiburon, Tiburon Fire Protection district, Central Marin Police Authority, Marin County Transit District, Marin Municipal Water District, and Stinson Beach Fire District, existing as an entity separate from its member agencies and organized under California Government Code Sections 6500, et seq., for the purpose of constructing and operating a countywide public safety and emergency radio system in the County of Marin; and

Whereas, the Marin Emergency Radio Authority has determined the need to replace the existing countywide public safety and emergency radio system as a result of several factors that include the age and obsolescence of the current system, user demand exceeds the current system's capacity, the current system cannot meet new FCC standards that are effective in 2017, and federal law that requires that the current public safety and emergency radio frequencies be turned back to the federal government in 202; and the Marin Emergency Radio Authority plans to have a new replacement system operational in 2018 to ensure reliable public safety and emergency radio communications; and

Whereas, on December 11, 2013, the Governing Board of the Marin Emergency Radio Authority approved a project financing plan that includes the levy of a parcel tax (the "Parcel Tax") to finance the capital costs of the new system to offset such costs to its member agencies; and the proposed Parcel Tax is \$29.00 annually per parcel for a single family residence, and varies based on land use, such as multi-family housing, commercial, industrial and agricultural uses, and includes an exemption for income-qualified senior homeowners; and

Whereas, the Parcel Tax is scheduled to be submitted to Marin County voters at the November 4, 2014 election; and

Whereas, on December 11, 2013, the Governing Board of the Marin Emergency Radio Authority further approved the establishment of an Independent Citizen Oversight Committee to review the collection and expenditure of the Parcel Tax revenues, and to consist of at least five members, who would be residents of Marin County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax does support and endorse the levy of the Parcel Tax as approved by the Governing Board of the Marin Emergency Radio Authority.

The foregoing resolution was adopted at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax held in said Town on the 2nd day of July 2014 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

DAVID WEINSOFF, Mayor

Attest:

Michele Gardner, Town Clerk

AMERA STAFF REPORT

MEETING

DATE: June 4, 2014

TO: Fairfax Town Council

FROM: David Jeffries, MERA Special Project Manager

SUBJECT: **MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY
(MERA) – NEXT GENERATION: REQUEST TO
SUPPORT AND ENDORSE A PARCEL TAX TO
FUND THE NEXT GENERATION PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM**

REQUEST:

Receive a presentation on the proposed funding mechanism for the second generation Marin Emergency Radio Authority public safety communications system and approve a Resolution supporting and endorsing the proposed parcel tax as the funding mechanism for capital costs of this project.

DISCUSSION:

1. Introduction:

Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) is a collection of public agencies formed in 1998 to plan, implement and manage a countywide public safety and emergency radio system for the use of all member agencies. All Marin County public safety agencies can communicate through MERA, including police departments, fire departments, public works departments, animal control, transportation agencies and parks departments. MERA provides crucial public safety communications to 25 member agencies, both day-to-day and during and after a major emergency or natural disaster.

In addition to the Marin County agencies there are a number of partner agencies that include the California Highway Patrol dispatch, Golden Gate Transit dispatch, US Coast Guard, Petaluma Police dispatch, Sonoma County Sheriff dispatch, State Emergency Management and Mutual Aid, to name a few.

MERA radio communications is the backbone of the 911 emergency response system. It provides the communications link between 911 public safety dispatch centers and the field units that respond to emergencies.

MERA and local Police and Fire Chiefs provided a presentation in the fall of 2013 to all MERA member agencies describing the status of the Gen I system and plans for the Gen II system.

2. Why the MERA Gen I System Must Be Upgraded:

The current Gen I system will face several significant risks over the next few years. The “history” of MERA can be traced back to 1995 when the County of Marin initiated a “needs assessment” for a countywide radio system. Over the course of the next few years, outreach and feasibility studies were conducted and an Oversight Committee was created. In 1998 “MERA” was officially formed. In February 1999, the MERA Board authorized the sale of bonds in the amount of \$26,940,000 to finance the first MERA radio system. The system was designed to accommodate 1,580 mobile and portable radios with expansion capacity to 2,500 radios. As we look to replace the Gen I system in 2018, the key risks are listed below:

- **Reliability** – The current system was designed in 1998 and has been in service since 2004. By 2018, it will be 20 years past its design phase and will have been in service for 14 years. Key components are no longer being manufactured and MERA is finding it increasingly difficult to locate replacement equipment. While MERA believes we can maintain a reliable system until 2018, system reliability will continue to decrease over time.
- **Capacity** – The Gen I system was designed to gradually increase to 2,500 users over 20 years. We are already past that mark at nearly 2,900 users with requests for additional radios on a regular basis.
- **Coverage** – We have been aware of areas that could greatly benefit from increased coverage. Key areas of concern have been in Southern Marin and West Marin.
- **Out of Compliance** – While the MERA Gen I system has been capable of upgrades to meet evolving FCC technical requirements, the Gen I system will not be capable of meeting new ‘narrow-banding’ requirements that will be in place in 2017.
- **Frequency Give Back** – Even if MERA could address all of the above risks, the FCC is now requiring that MERA give back its current UHF-T band frequencies in 2021.

It is this array of risks, taken in combination, which has driven MERA’s proposed Gen II system. The bottom line is that the Gen I system is approaching a time in which we will not be able to sustain the system and it needs to be replaced. To meet our “go-live” target of 2018, the replacement project needs to begin in 2015 with a solid funding source.

3. The Generation II System:

To mitigate the impending risks and to allow MERA and its member agencies to maintain a reliable public safety and emergency communications system, MERA has developed a proposal for a Next Generation (Gen II) communications system with the following features:

- **Response Times** - Reduce 911 response times with an upgraded radio network, better technology and additional user capacity. This will also reduce MERA radio user wait times, by reducing busy signals during major events.
- **Coverage** - Reduce response times and improve safety in certain areas of the county through additional coverage areas. The Gen II proposal includes two additional sites in Southern Marin and two additional sites in West Marin.

- **Increased Reliability** - Provide upgraded radios, radio network, and dispatch consoles with the latest software, with streamlined user interfaces for maximum efficiency.
- **Compliance** - Comply with new federal regulations in force over the next few years.
- **Move to 700 MHz** - Offering regional interoperability throughout the Bay Area with a move to a 700 MHz system and additional access to the 800 MHz frequencies.
- **New Radios** – Up-to-date radios and technology, supported by a more modern infrastructure, such as GPS tracking of resources as a potential example, that will be provided to first responder and safety personnel.

4. Generation II Funding:

The current MERA system was purchased using bonds that have obligations to the member agencies until August, 2020. Using this method of funding the Generation II system would require MERA member agencies to provide annual funding for the Generation II bonds, beginning in FY 15/16 and ending in FY 35/36.

To minimize the impacts to local government budgets for the Next Generation system, several funding alternatives have been explored. As mentioned in the Round I presentation, MERA did look at different funding mechanisms, such as a sales tax or general obligation bond, but found much less community support for those options. Additional potential funding alternatives include grants and low interest loans, and a parcel tax. MERA has selected a parcel tax as the best and most viable option available to raise the necessary funds to successfully complete the project.

This does not mean that the County and MERA have not been seeking grant funds. In fact, Marin County has been successful in securing over \$6,000,000 in grants for the Next Generation system. Grants have supported system design studies, and the installation of backbone radio elements, dispatch consoles and microwave components. However, we do not believe that grant funding will cover all of the costs of the Next Generation system, nor do we believe it prudent to presume any particular level of grant funding into the future. We will continue to look for grant opportunities that could potentially reduce the level of parcel tax in the future as well as opportunities to minimize operating and maintenance costs.

At the same time, we are very concerned about the impact of the Parcel Tax failing to pass. If that should occur, MERA and its member agencies would need to either quickly find another funding mechanism, such as the traditional or existing method of MERA member contributions described later, or having each MERA member possibly licensing and funding their own communications systems, while trying to cooperate in some means of creating interoperability across multiple systems with limited coverage.

The County of Marin is the legal entity that must place the parcel tax on the ballot as MERA itself does not have the legal authority to do so. Bonds in the amount of \$46 million need to be issued to provide adequate funding for the new system.

5. Generation II Budget:

The proposed budget for the MERA Generation II system is \$40 million, with an additional \$6.3 million in additional bond costs. This assumes a reuse of building and towers were appropriate as well as a 1 for 1 replacement of field radios for MERA member agencies.

Site Development and Upgrades, Environmental Compliance, Licensing & Leases	\$10.6M
Radio Communication System, Site Equipment and Dispatch Consoles	\$13.9M
Microwave System	\$5.0M
Mobile and Portable Radios	\$10.5M
SUBTOTAL CAPITAL COSTS (Includes Contingency)	\$40.0M
Bond Capitalized Interest	\$2.3M
Bond Reserve Fund	\$3.6M
Bond Issuance Costs	\$0.4M
TOTAL BOND ISSUANCE	\$46.3M

(All figures are in millions)

To provide an illustration of the potential impacts on MERA member agencies from the traditional vs. Parcel Tax means of funding the Gen II system, the following table and charts were developed. MERA first looked at using the same mechanism as was used for the Gen I bond funding, with costs spread equally across twenty years. This resulted in a significant impact during the first several years of Gen II funding that overlap with the final years of Gen I funding. This model was shared during the Round I presentations.

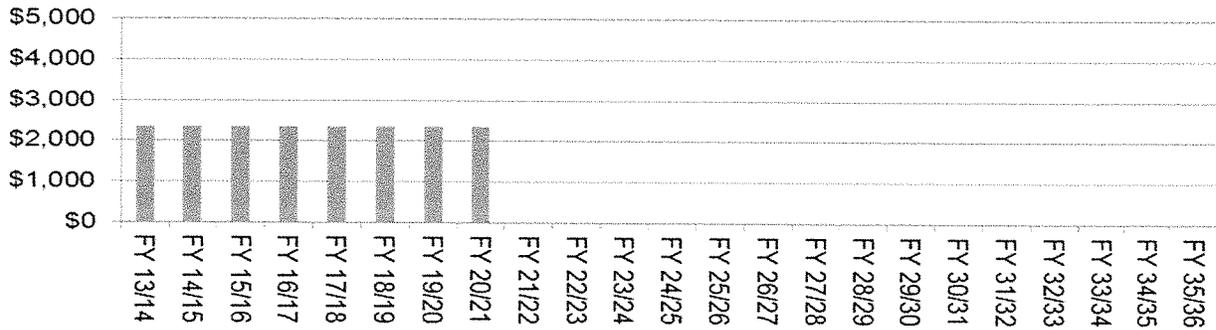
Recognizing the impacts of that model, MERA has looked at an alternative for Gen II funding should the Parcel Tax fail to pass. In this model, a smoothing technique is used in which MERA members would make interest only payments from FY 15/16 thru FY 20/21, reducing the impacts of these overlapping years, with payments being caught up in the remaining thirteen years. It is this model that is illustrated below. It should be noted that MERA has adopted the Parcel Tax as its method to fund the Gen II system and that the Gen II figures below are provided as an illustration of the potential impacts should the Parcel Tax fail to pass.

Annual MERA System-wide Capital Costs if Parcel Tax Fails to Pass (Gen II with smoothing):

	FY 13/14	FY 14/15	FY 15/16	FY 16/17	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23
Gen I	\$2,347	\$2,347	\$2,347	\$2,347	\$2,347	\$2,347	\$2,347	\$2,347		
Gen II			\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$4,400	\$4,400
Total	\$2,347	\$2,347	\$4,547	\$4,547	\$4,547	\$4,547	\$4,547	\$4,547	\$4,400	\$4,400

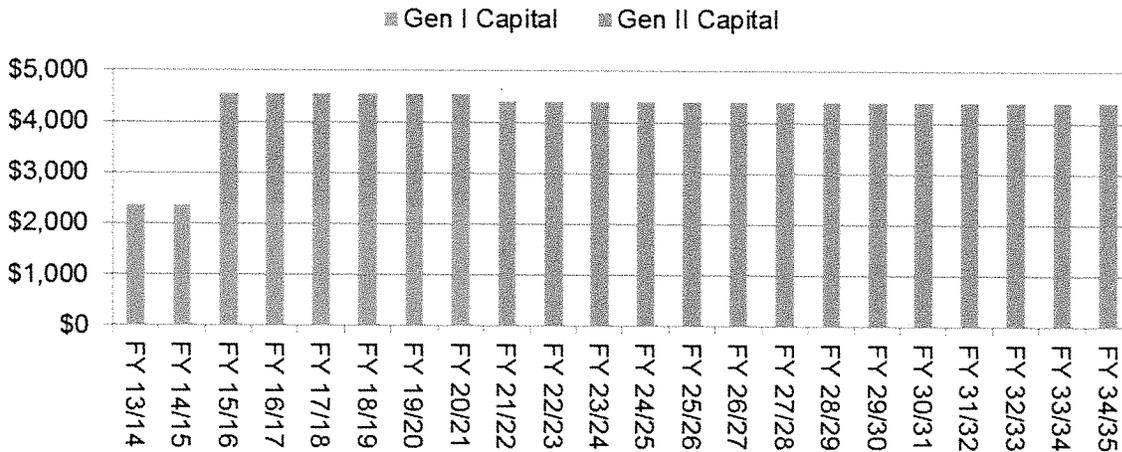
(All figures are in thousands)

Annual MERA System-wide Capital Costs if the Parcel Tax Wins Approval:



(All figures are in thousands)

Annual MERA System-wide Capital Costs if Parcel Tax Fails to Pass with Smoothing:



(All figures are in thousands)

It should be noted that MERA has not adopted a traditional or smoothed mechanism for funding of the Gen II system as we believe the Parcel Tax method best serves our member agencies, but these mechanisms are included in this report to illustrate the need to focus the efforts and energies of MERA and our member agencies on the success of the Parcel Tax proposal.

6. Operating and Maintenance Estimates:

During the MERA Round I presentations, there were a number of requests for information on Operating and Maintenance costs as we move forward. Looking at our current costs and those of other similar systems, MERA staff has developed estimates through FY 2022. These costs, impacted by both inflation and the need to operate and maintain an expanded system, show an average annualized increase of 7.4%.

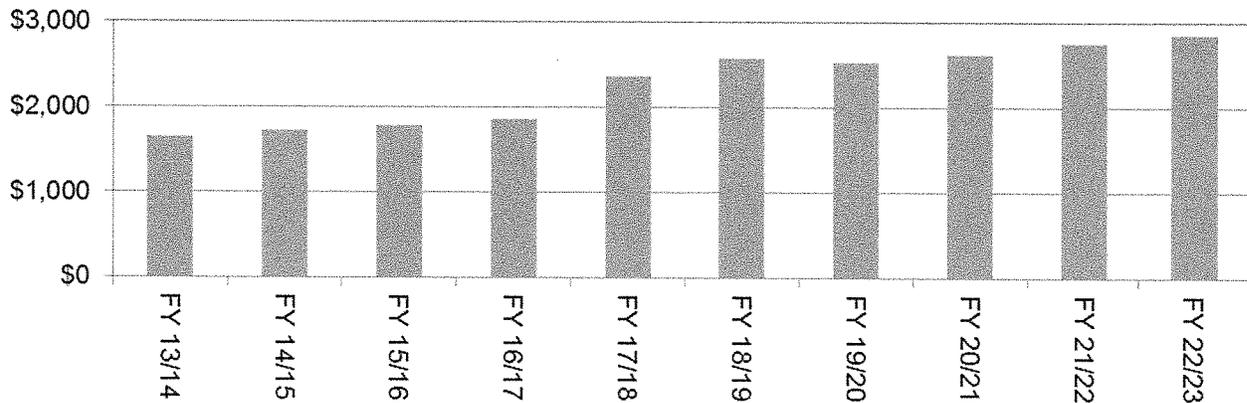
As you review these figures, please keep two caveats in mind: first, that the future Operating and Maintenance costs are educated estimates; second, that the individual figures for local jurisdictions (later in this staff report) assume that there will be no additional MERA members or changes to the cost-sharing mechanism.

Estimated MERA System-wide Operations and Maintenance Costs thru FY 22/23:

FY 13/14	FY 14/15	FY 15/16	FY 16/17	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23
\$1,650	\$1,728	\$1,795	\$1,866	\$2,374	\$2,580	\$2,536	\$2,624	\$2,753	\$2,870

(All figures are in thousands)

Estimated MERA System-wide Operations and Maintenance Costs thru FY 22/23:



(All figures are in thousands)

One option MERA is considering is a Service Upgrade Agreement (SUA). As an example of a SUA, MERA would receive bi-annual system and technology upgrades for the first ten years of the system’s life. We currently estimate that this option could increase MERA’s Operating and Maintenance costs by \$450,000 per year over the first ten years of the Gen II system while putting MERA in an upgraded position as the Gen II system enters its second decade. We anticipate asking that potential vendors provide a separate description and cost description from the core project proposal to allow MERA to evaluate the value of this additional feature.

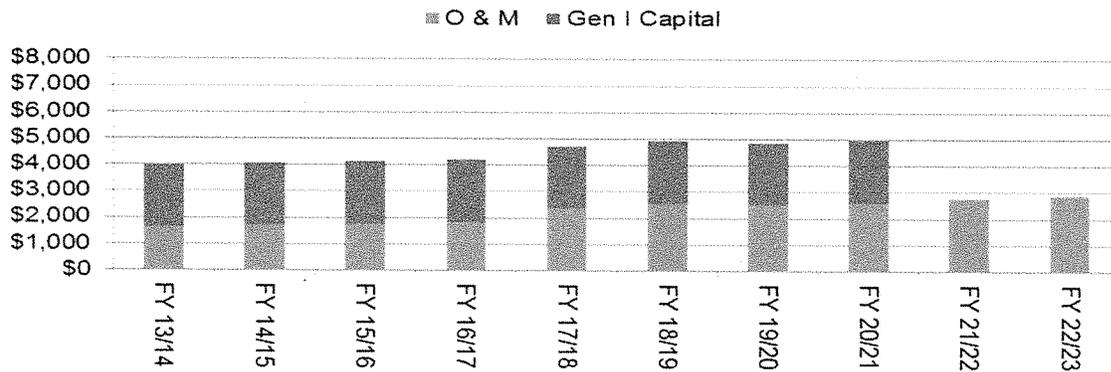
MERA understands that technology life is a concern of MERA member agencies as it is for MERA itself. In addition to the SUA, the RFP process provides MERA an opportunity to extensively investigate and review this issue with potential vendors. An RFP was prepared and issued by the County in June 2010 and is attached as Appendix G to the Feasibility Study. That RFP provided valuable information to our planning process, but has lapsed and will need to be updated, reissued and a competitive process initiated once funding is secured. The MERA Governing Board will approve the process, determining what additional expertise is desired to finalize an RFP, and what expertise is desired for reviewing proposals. As a reminder, the Governing Board includes one representative from each MERA member agency.

The eventual RFP will contain criteria to rank responders on a number of issues. Projected system life is one of the factors to be considered by the Governing Board in making their final vendor selection.

7. Combined Cost Impacts:

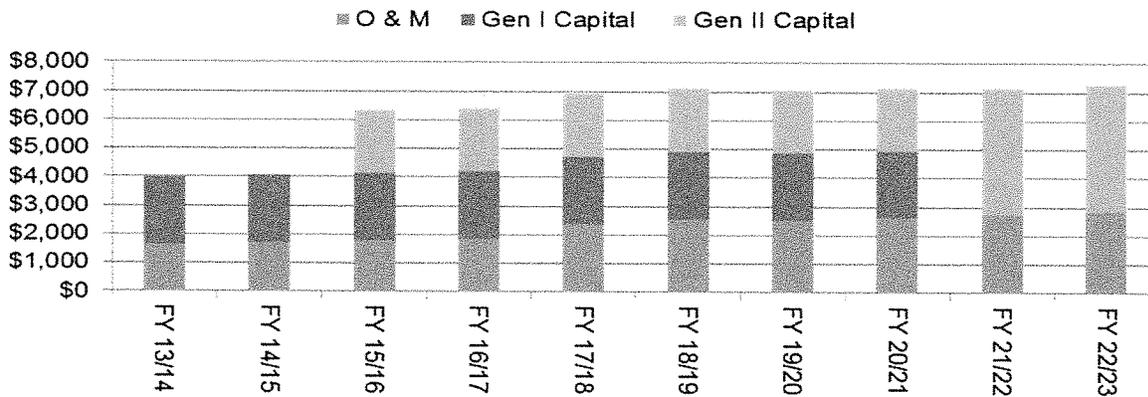
With the additional information of the Operating and Maintenance estimations, we can also look at the combined costs of the Gen I, Gen II and Operating and Maintenance costs to further illustrate the importance of the Parcel Tax proposal on MERA member agencies. The following charts show the total of the Gen I Bonds with Operating and Maintenance, should the Parcel Tax pass, and then the combined costs of Gen I and Gen II with Operating and Maintenance costs should the Parcel Tax fail as well as with the smoothing formula. As the Operating and Maintenance estimates go thru FY 2022, these graphs show the impact through that fiscal year.

Annual Capital and O&M MERA System-wide Member Costs if the Parcel Tax Passes:



(All figures are in thousands)

Annual Capital and O&M MERA System-wide Member Costs if the Parcel Tax Fails with Smoothing:



(All figures are in thousands)

8. MERA Member Agency Expense Estimates:

The data included in this section are estimates developed for your agency. As a reminder, the Generation I bond cost is based on the current costs and adopted funding mechanism. The Generation II cost above assumes the Parcel Tax fails AND that there are no changes in the current MERA funding mechanisms for distribution of costs across member agencies and that with the smoothing model there is an assumption of interest only payments for seven years with increased annual costs for the remaining thirteen years. Lastly, the Operating and Maintenance cost is based on existing current costs and an educated estimate for future years that also assumes that MERA member costs will be distributed as are Generation I bond costs.

a. Generation I Bond Costs: \$47,000 annually thru FY 20/21.

b. Generation II Bond Costs with Smoothing: \$44,000 annually from FY 15/16 thru FY 20/21 and \$88,000 from FY 21/22 thru FY 35/36.

c. Operating and Maintenance Costs: (Estimated)

FY 13/14	FY 14/15	FY 15/16	FY 16/17	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23
\$33	\$35	\$36	\$37	\$47	\$52	\$51	\$52	\$55	\$57

(All figures in thousands)

d. Parcel Tax Passes: Gen I Bond Costs and Operating and Maintenance Costs:
(Estimated)

FY 13/14	FY 14/15	FY 15/16	FY 16/17	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23
\$80	\$82	\$83	\$84	\$94	\$99	\$98	\$99	\$55	\$57

(All figures in thousands)

e. Parcel Tax Fails: Gen I and II Bond Costs and Operating and Maintenance Costs With Smoothing: (Estimated)

FY 13/14	FY 14/15	FY 15/16	FY 16/17	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23
\$80	\$82	\$127	\$128	\$138	\$143	\$142	\$143	\$143	\$145

(All figures in thousands)

9. Latest Polling Data:

MERA has recently conducted a second public opinion survey. This survey focused on the details of the Parcel Tax as described in this staff report. As mentioned in the Round I presentations, the 2013 survey was broad based and helped to develop the funding proposal. The

findings of the January 2014 survey include: (Poll conducted 01/26-29/14 with 400 surveys and a margin of error of 4.5%)

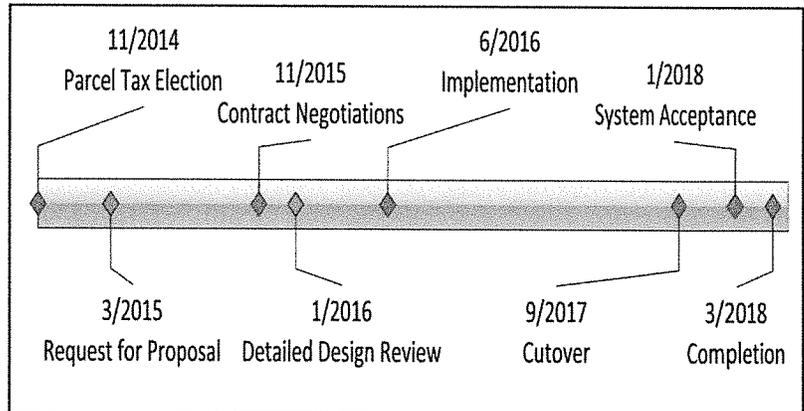
- Support for a \$29 parcel tax measure is marginally higher than the \$45 measure tested in 2012.
- However, support still falls short of the two-thirds vote threshold both initially (62%) and after positive arguments (64%).
- The lowering of the Parcel Tax to \$29 was offset by the diminished concern about the need for reliable emergency communications among respondents.
- The two strongest arguments in favor of a measure cite the need for communications during a natural disaster and highlight how a new system would improve 911 response times.
- A public information effort is needed to raise awareness of the importance of the MERA system and the need to replace the current system with the Gen II system.

By the time that the second round of presentations is complete, MERA will have delivered 48 presentations throughout Marin County on the future of the MERA system and the need for the Generation II system, with public, council and board feedback. In addition, MERA has already held 11 Strategic Plan development meetings and 56 implementation meetings. This work has been accomplished by the MERA Governing Board, Executive Board, Project Oversight Committee, Finance Committee, Governance Workgroup and the Operations and System Technology Workgroup.

MERA will also be conducting a proactive public education campaign, including firefighters, police and direct community outreach, from April thru June to increase public awareness of MERA and the critical importance of this project.

10. Tentative Gen II Project Timeline:

- 11/2014: Parcel Tax Election
- 03/2015: Request for Proposal
- 11/2015: Contract Negotiations
- 01/2016: Detailed Design Review
- 06/2016: Begin Implementation
- 09/2017: System Cutover
- 01/2018: System Acceptance
- 03/2018: Project Completion



11. Parcel Tax Details:

The Parcel Tax has been developed by the MERA Finance Committee and is based on a study by NBS. The Parcel Tax details for different property types are shown below.

Proposed Parcel Tax Rates:

Property Description	Method	Maximum Rate
Single-Family Residential	Per Parcel	\$29.00
Multi-Family Residential	Per Unit	\$26.10
Agricultural		
Up to 5 Acres – Small	Per Parcel	\$29.00
Greater than 5 acres – Large	Per Parcel	\$58.00
Commercial, Industrial and Utility		
Up to ½ acre	Per Parcel	\$87.00
Greater than ½ acre & up to 1 acre	Per Parcel	\$174.00
Greater than 1 acre	\$174 per parcel + \$29/acre	Up to cap of \$2,500.00

Parcel Tax Revenues by Category:

Parcel Tax Categories	# of Parcels	Tax Units	Total Parcel Tax	Average per Parcel	Median
Single Family	81,107	81,107	\$2,352,103	\$29	\$29
Multi-Family	4,986	24,551	\$640,791	\$129	\$52
Agricultural	715	1,361	\$39,469	\$55	\$58
Commercial, Industrial & Utility	4,015	10,360	\$585,193	\$145	\$87

The proposed parcel tax will include exemptions for income qualified senior homeowners. The parcel tax proposal also includes the formation of an Independent Citizen Oversight Committee that shall review the collection and expenditure of tax revenues collected under the authority of the parcel tax measure.

During the latter half of 2013, all MERA member agencies were provided with an overview of the system, the current challenges and the proposed solution and funding mechanism. As a result of that process and the feedback received, MERA reviewed and updated the proposal, with the MERA Governing Board approving the updated plan on 12/11/2013. The current action plan for the project is that beginning in February, 2014 through June, 2014 each MERA member agency will be asked to formally endorse the project funding plan for the Next Generation MERA system. In July, 2014, a request will be made to the County of Marin Board of Supervisors to put a countywide parcel tax measure on the ballot in November, 2014.

ACTION ITEM:

With the support of all of the MERA member agencies, we will be able to continue and improve our countywide public safety communications system for years to come with a Parcel Tax based

on a single-family residence assessment of just \$29 per year. With your support, we can build on the already strong public support identified in our polling and help inform our community of the importance of this Parcel Tax on the November 2014 ballot.

MERA would like to reiterate that the Gen I system needs to be replaced in 2018 and while that is still four years away, it will be a busy four years. Delays will increase the risk of degraded public safety communications and equipment failure. MERA also believes that the successful passage of the Parcel Tax is in the best interest of MERA and for your organization in order to fund this critical project.

To that end, MERA is requesting that each MERA member agency pass a resolution to support and endorse the proposed MERA Parcel Tax. The attached resolution is being provided to each MERA member agency with the intent that all of the resolutions will be provided to the Marin County Board of Supervisors as MERA seeks to have the Parcel Tax placed on the November 2014 ballot.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None at this time, but significant potential costs should the Parcel Tax fail.

ALTERNATIVES:

Do not approve the Resolution of Support for the MERA Parcel Tax.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution