



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type: Watershed Committee/Special Meeting Board of Directors
Title: Road and Trail Management Plan Update
From: Shaun Horne, Director of Watershed Resources
Through: Ben Horenstein, General Manager
Meeting Date: June 18, 2026

TYPE OF ITEM: Approve X Review and Comment

RECOMMENDATION: Receive a staff presentation regarding the Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) update, including outcomes from the May Open House Workshop and the next steps in the process

SUMMARY: Marin Water (District) has initiated an update to its 2005 Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) to guide resource protection efforts, maintenance, and future watershed access. The update will incorporate updated resource data, management practices, and stakeholder input to ensure alignment with current road and trail management objectives. Since initiating the update, the District has conducted an extensive public engagement process, including Watershed Committee updates, two community open house workshops, and three community site walks. These events have provided opportunities for community members to learn about the planning process, explore watershed roads and trails, and share feedback on topics including trail classifications, visitor management, stewardship, and recreation.

In May 2026, the District hosted a community open house workshop focused on three preliminary planning scenarios. Participants reviewed and provided feedback on potential approaches to road and trail management, restoration, and visitor management. Staff will present a summary of community feedback received during the May 2026 open house workshop and review key themes identified through the evaluation of three preliminary planning scenarios.

DISCUSSION: In April of 2005, the District adopted the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP), which describes the best management practices and environmental protection measures the District will implement to maintain watershed roads and trails. Under the RTMP the District conducts proactive maintenance on roads to support emergency access and operation of water infrastructure. Similarly, the District conducts trail maintenance to protect water quality, support public access and protect natural and biological resources. The District utilizes a combination of staff, volunteers and contractors to carry out annual road and trail maintenance on the watershed.

Over the past two decades, the District has advanced broader planning efforts to better understand changing visitor use patterns and long-standing recreation-related issues on Mt. Tamalpais. In 2024, the District completed the Watershed Recreation Management Plan (WRMP) Feasibility Study, which evaluated watershed use trends and identified opportunities to support safe, inclusive access while protecting the watershed's unique biodiversity, habitat, and water quality. The WRMP Feasibility Study provides community-informed recommendations that will help shape the RTMP update currently underway.

The RTMP update is focused on evaluating opportunities for modifications to trail characteristics and classifications, bike access routes, restoration and stewardship priorities, and visitor management and outreach strategies. To support the RTMP update, the District issued a Request for Proposals in September 2025 seeking a consultant team with expertise in road and trail planning, recreation management, environmental analysis, and public engagement. Following a competitive selection process, the Board of Directors awarded a contract to Ascent Environmental, Inc. in October 2025. Since that time, District staff and the consultant team have worked collaboratively to advance technical analysis, public outreach, and development of planning scenarios for consideration as part of the RTMP update.

In November 2025, the District hosted two open house events. Approximately 170–200 people attended, representing cyclists, hikers, runners, equestrians, anglers and local environmental groups. Participants provided feedback on RTMP goals, social trail restoration priorities, bike trail characteristics and potential routes, and opportunities to enhance community engagement and education. Staff observed a strong connection among attendees to the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed and a shared interest in long-term stewardship, with feedback emphasizing balancing recreational access with ecological protection, including minimizing erosion, protecting wildlife, and maintaining water quality. Marin Water staff and the consultant team have reviewed and analyzed the community input, which will be used to inform next steps in the planning process and RTMP updates.

In January, February, and April 2026, the District hosted three Community Site Walks focused on segments of trail that are being considered for change of use to help community members gain an understanding for current conditions, natural resources, stewardship and volunteer opportunities, signage, and visitor facilities.

Building on feedback received through these earlier engagement efforts, the District hosted a community open house workshop in May 2026 focused on three preliminary planning scenarios developed to assess community priorities. Staff and the consultant team have reviewed and analyzed the community input received through the workshop to identify key themes and areas of consensus. Staff will present a summary of the May workshop, review community feedback and key themes, and discuss how the input will inform development of the draft RTMP and associated environmental review.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: Not applicable at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ATTACHMENT(S): None.