

covid-19 in marin

Marin remains under purple tier-1 restrictions for widespread transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19, under the state's four-tier blueprint for reopening the economy.

The following data is per the county Department of Health and Human Services as of 4 p.m. Feb. 8, unless otherwise noted.

Vaccine status

Distribution phase: Currently in Phase 1B, Tier 1 — People 75 and older. Marin has not announced when it will move to the next group, those ages 65-74.

By the numbers: 35,214 residents have received at least one dose of vaccine, or 13.5 percent of the population, with 8,536 of those receiving their second dose. Up from 29,213, or 11.2 percent, and 5,180 receiving their second dose the previous week.

Sign up: To be notified when a vaccine and appointment become available to you, visit the county's signup form at arkn.ws/cov19vaxinterest.

Virus status

Tiburon & Alto Strawberry: 211 cumulative diagnosed cases, up from 200 the previous week. The combined census tracts have an overall rate of 1,818 cumulative cases per 100,000 residents.

Belvedere: 37 cumulative diagnosed cases, unchanged from the previous week. The city has an overall rate of 1,741 cumulative cases per 100,000 residents.

Strawberry peninsula: 61 cumulative diagnosed cases, up from 58 the previous week. The area has an overall rate of 1,460 cumulative cases per 100,000 residents.

Marin: 10,419 diagnosed cases, 500 active, 148 deaths and six COVID-positive patients in intensive-care-unit beds. There were 10,132 total cases, 598 active, 145 deaths and six COVID ICU patients the previous week.

Marin case metrics: The adjusted seven-day average daily new-case rate was 14.7 per 100,000 residents and seven-day test positivity was 3.4 percent as of Feb. 2. Marin's R-eff was 0.86, indicating decreasing spread, as of Feb. 6, according to the California COVID Assessment Tool.

California: 3,346,340 diagnosed cases, 44,150 deaths, per the California Department of Public Health as of Feb. 7. Up from 3,258,706 diagnosed cases, 40,908 deaths the previous week.

U.S.: 26.9 million cases, 462,037 deaths, per the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as of noon Feb. 8. Up from 26 million cases, 439,995 deaths the previous week.

World: 105.8 million cases, 2.31 million deaths, per the World Health Organization as of 1:30 p.m. Feb. 8. Up from 102.6 million cases, 2.22 million deaths the previous week.

CORRECTIONS

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Popular Strawberry footbridge's closure for repairs irks residents

Condo association says red tape, construction restrictions delaying work

By EMILY LAVIN

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A pedestrian bridge that links a popular bayfront walking route from Tiburon to Strawberry is in need of structural repairs that will likely keep it shut down through at least the early summer, extending a months-long closure that has frustrated residents who now must detour onto a busy stretch of Tiburon Boulevard.

The bridge connects the path that runs along Harbor Cove Way, which begins in unincorporated Tiburon where Greenwood Bay Drive meets Greenwood Cove Drive, just off the latter's intersection with Tiburon Boulevard.

The path runs parallel to Greenwood Bay Drive, behind the Greenwood Bay Condominiums, on what otherwise would be a small dead-end peninsula into Richardson Bay. However, pedestrians can use the bridge to span the roughly 50-foot-wide inlet of the bay.



ELLIOT KARLAN / FOR THE ARK

The pedestrian bridge connecting a popular bayfront walking route between Tiburon and Strawberry has been closed since late October after an engineer's report determined it was in need of repair. The Greenwood Bay Condominiums Homeowners Association, which is in charge of maintaining the bridge, hopes to secure the needed permits and begin work in June.

Harbor Cove Way then continues into Strawberry near Strawberry Point Elementary School.

Cyclists and dog-walkers are supposed to use the paved street, which

eventually runs into East Strawberry Drive, while others can veer south to follow a waterfront coastal path that

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Town backs Blackie's beach restoration project

Regional agencies will have final say over design, permits

By DEIRDRE McCROHAN

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A proposed "living shorelines" project to restore and prevent erosion to the beach at Blackie's Pasture has received the blessing of the Tiburon Town Council — though it still has a long way to go to win formal approval.

Following the recommendation of the town's Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission late last year, the Town Council at its Feb. 3 meeting voted 4-0 in favor of the project, with Councilmember David Kulik absent. The council recommendation came despite concerns from some neighbors that the project will attract more visitors to the area.

Next, the project needs formal approval from a coalition of Bay Area

permitting agencies, including the Bay Conservation and Development Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The bay commission will ultimately select its preferred design between two proposed plans.

Blackie's Pasture beach, which flanks the mouth of a drainage creek, is a jumble of riprap built with leftover

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construction debris, broken concrete and asphalt slabs with a mud scarp behind. A team of scientists led by Senior Civil Engineer Roger Leventhal of Marin County Public Works is seeking to create a man-made beach there to demonstrate a more natural approach to fighting shore erosion by using gently sloping sand and gravel instead of hard materials like seawalls and riprap bouldering.

The team hopes to do the same at Paradise Beach Park and off Seminary Drive in Strawberry, both in unincorporated Marin. Previously, Leventhal and his team in 2011-2012 designed and constructed a man-made beach on Strawberry's Aramburu Island as part of a \$2.5 million restoration project headed by the Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary.

The project sketches out two possible restoration designs. The first is a hard-engineered design that would follow a "gravel beach design template," with a base layer of large cobble and gravel that has an offshore terrace to break waves before they hit the shoreline. That would be topped by a gentle slope of fine gravel along the shore. Leventhal said the design would have a greater visual impact than the second design, could include a habitat impact due to the conversion from a mudflat, could be costlier up

front and could be harder to obtain permits for — though it would require less maintenance and would have more certainty for long-term erosion benefits.

The second design, a "dynamic beach nourishment" option, would add sediment and shape where needed, with small retention sills and a buried gravel berm. It would have a reduced impact on the habitat over the first design and require less upfront work in bringing in sediment, but it could require more long-term maintenance and would have less certainty for erosion benefits.

The project has tentatively been awarded \$380,000 in regional Measure AA funds to complete the final design and environmental permitting work. The estimated cost of construction is \$1.2 million to \$1.5 million, although the team hasn't obtained funding for that yet. Leventhal said he is hopeful they can get a grant for that as well, once they have the final design in hand. It would take four to eight weeks to complete installation.

The town would be on the hook for ongoing maintenance a few years down the road, after the sediment has been placed and nature has taken its course. There is no current estimate for the cost of that ongoing maintenance, which would involve replenishing the sediment and would be done every five to 10 years.

The project is designed to complement a seablite- and pickleweed-planting project in the tidal marshlands run by San Francisco

State University biologist Katharyn Boyer, a researcher with the Estuary & Ocean Science Center at the Romberg Tiburon Campus on Paradise Drive. Leventhal was a member of Boyer's team on that project, which also sought to reduce erosion and improve wildlife habitat at Blackie's beach. It was approved by the Town Council in January 2018 and completed in 2019.

At previous parks commission hearings on the proposal, Greenwood Beach Road residents expressed concern the project would attract more visitors — and car traffic — to the area. Several echoed those worries at the council's Feb. 3 meeting.

Greg Moore of Greenwood Beach Road said he and wife Nancy Peterson support efforts to improve shoreline resilience, in particular, the gravel beach design, but they hoped the town would recognize the impact increased visitors would have on their street, where locals already park when the Blackie's Pasture lot is full.

Bruce Abbott, another longtime Greenwood Beach Road resident, said he was "very concerned about traffic congestion and crowds overwhelming the area and parking." People come to beaches not just to swim but to hang out on the beach, and Tiburon is much closer to San Francisco than Stinson Beach, he said.

Abbott and his wife, Sidsel Moller, said they also are worried about the detrimental effect of making the area more attractive to

visitors, especially those with dogs, on the northeastern waters of Richardson Bay, which are an Audubon bird sanctuary. The sanctuary waters are off-limits to watercraft from October through March every year. He said people let their dogs off leash and the consequence now is that migratory birds such as great blue herons and snowy egrets who come for rest and sustenance are driven away. He said that would get worse if more people come to the beach.

Abbott pointed out that Blackie's Pasture was acquired in 1972 with the proceeds of bond funds to be used only for open space purchases.

"I urge you to be careful with what you're doing here," he said. "Without serious consideration, you could set in motion a series of enterprises that would destroy the property and its benefits for generations to come."

Greenwood Beach Road resident Michael Savage called the beach restoration project "a very mixed blessing," noting that it's the latest attempt to make Blackie's Pasture and the nearby waterfront more like a city park.

"It isn't as attractive," he said. "Trees are being taken down. It should look more like the rural park it used to look like."

Leventhal reiterated that the goal of the project is shoreline protection, noting Marin is extremely vulnerable to sea-level rise, and expressed his desire to partner with

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Bridge, *continued from page 5*

runs behind several homes and leads to a public dock owned by the Strawberry Recreation District.

The bridge is maintained by the Greenwood Bay Condominiums Homeowners Association, which was forced to abruptly close it last October after an engineering report deemed it unsafe, said Richard Gunn, president of the homeowners association.

Gunn said the engineering firm, which had been hired to assess several areas of the property for structural issues, determined the columns that hold up the bridge had degraded over the years, damage that is sometimes visible at low tide.

"The engineer specifically recommended that we barricade (the bridge) and close it down to the public," Gunn said. The homeowners association has also closed off a public pier on the Tiburon side of the path that the engineering firm similarly determined needs repairs.

After receiving the engineer's report, the homeowners association put up a couple of two-by-four wood barriers and "closed" signs across the bridge's two entrances — but that proved ineffective, Gunn said, as people would simply climb over the barriers, and someone eventually removed the wood altogether. The homeowners association last month installed more secure barriers made of wood and wire that reach about 6 feet tall, completely blocking access to the bridge. Gunn said they also had special signs made reading "pedestrian bridge closed for repairs."

The extended closure has irked residents, several of whom have taken to online neighborhood forum Nextdoor.com in recent months to express their frustration and confusion

"Seriously, what's going on with the walking path in Strawberry?" Tiburon resident Kayla Zabrycki posted last month, alongside



Signs of deterioration can be seen on the footbridge connecting a bayfront walking route between Tiburon and Strawberry that has been closed since late October after an engineer's report determined it was in need of repair.

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ARK GRAPHIC, APPLE MAPS 2021

a picture of the barricaded bridge.

"Why are they putting an extreme amount of effort into keeping people off the bridge — but literally absolutely zero progress in these 'needed renovations'? It has been months."

Others noted the bridge closure forces pedestrians and cyclists traveling between Tiburon and Strawberry to instead use

Tiburon Boulevard and East Strawberry Drive, which draw heavy car traffic.

"Kids, elderly, disabled, families, you name it, use that bridge daily to go between Strawberry and Tiburon and are now forced to walk the shoulder of Tiburon Boulevard in front of (Westminster Presbyterian Church)," wrote Tiburon resident Nick Shorten. "The East Strawberry Drive entrance into downtown Tiburon is a race track for vehicles merging onto Tiburon Boulevard."

Karen Beale of Tiburon also noted the disruption.

"This is part of our daily dog walk, so (it's) super inconvenient not to have it," she wrote.

Several posters expressed confusion about who was responsible for the bridge's closure and repairs, with some wondering if neighbors had taken it upon themselves to close the bridge to reduce the amount of people flocking outdoors amid the pandemic.

"Many folks have been impacted by the above but there is no clear information, and this has been the situation for many weeks, if not months," Tiburon resident Sanford Goldeen wrote in response to a December post about the closure.

Gunn, however, noted the homeowners as-

sociation wants to reopen the bridge as soon as possible — but that's easier said than done. The association is putting together a permit application to submit to the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, the California Department of Fish and Game and the Army Corps of Engineers — all of whom need to sign off before the repairs can begin.

Gunn said he's also looking into whether the repairs would need approval from the county.

"The work requires we get permits from a lot of different agencies," Gunn said.

Though he expects to secure those permits within the next couple of months, the bridge repairs still likely won't be able to start until June, Gunn said, because the Bay Conservation and Development Commission has its own restrictions on when work may take place in the water, developed to protect wildlife and sensitive habitats. Under the commission's guidelines, the work to repair the bridge can only be done between June and November, Gunn said.

"We want to comply with the law completely," he said. "We want to be respectful of environmental conditions."

Gunn said the homeowners association is already talking with contractors so work can begin promptly once that window opens. He said he expects it will take three to four weeks to repair the bridge and another three to four weeks to repair the fishing pier.

He said he knows local residents miss the direct walking path, adding that it's a route favored by those living in the condo complex, as well.

"We miss it as much as everybody else," he said. "We want to get it back up and operational."

Emily Lavin is The Ark's assistant editor and Strawberry reporter. Reach her at 415-944-3841.