

POLICY WATCH – August 2023

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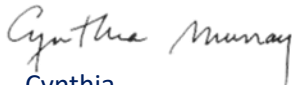


We have two big announcements at NBLC! First, I am retiring at the end of 2023 after over 17 years at the helm of the Council. And second, Joanne Webster, President and CEO, San Rafael Chamber of Commerce, is the incoming new CEO and President of NBLC. We are very excited that Joanne will be the new leader and look forward to her taking NBLC to the next level. Please see the article below for more information.

Also in this issue, NBLC welcomes a dynamic new member, GMH Builders. We are thrilled to have this company join us in our public policy work to make it easier to construct new housing and other infrastructure. Please read below to learn more about their work and contributions to the North Bay.

NBLC's annual State of the North Bay Conference is on October 12. The theme of this year's conference is "Planting the Seeds for Economic Growth," and will present original research by the Bay Area Council Economic Institute followed by a panel on the burgeoning entrepreneurial ecosystem in the North Bay. Tickets for this virtual event go on sale on September 13.

Best,


Cynthia

NBLC Announces Joanne Webster as Incoming CEO

North Bay Leadership Council (NBLC) has hired Joanne Webster as their incoming CEO upon the retirement of longtime CEO, Cynthia Murray at the end of the year. Jordan Lavinsky, Chair of NBLC's Board, said "The Board is confident that Joanne Webster can take North Bay Leadership Council to the next level in leading on public policy issues of interest to the leading employers in the North Bay. We are excited to have her as the voice of employers who have a big role to play in shaping sound public policy."

Joanne Webster has been with the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce since 2011, serving as President and CEO for the past 9 years. For three decades, Joanne has been an active member of the business community, winning Marin's Small Business of the Year and Spirit of Marin Awards in 1998 and 2008 and,

as Chamber CEO, the North Bay's Best Business Community Leader Award in 2021. Her specialties include business advocacy, connecting leaders and influencers, and building coalitions.

"I am honored and excited to succeed Cynthia Murray as the CEO of the North Bay Leadership Council and am deeply grateful for the opportunity. I look forward to working with the Board of Directors, membership and staff in the coming months as we move the organization forward together," Webster said.

Lavinsky also thanked Cynthia Murray upon her retirement. He said, "Cynthia Murray led the last big transformation of NBLC and her 17 years as CEO and President have made NBLC a force in the North Bay, the greater Bay Area, and the state of California. We appreciate her leadership and ability to steer NBLC through uncertain times, having led the Council through the Great Recession and the pandemic." Murray will continue to assist NBLC as a consultant after her retirement.

Cynthia Murray said, "It has been my honor to lead NBLC and see it grow in clout and effectiveness. I leave knowing that NBLC is in good hands with Joanne Webster at the helm. We have worked together for years and there is no one more capable of leading NBLC into its next iteration than Joanne. I look forward to a smooth transition as Joanne successfully steps into the leadership role."

Webster will join NBLC starting in November and will work with Murray until the end of the year.

North Bay Leadership Council is an employer-led public policy advocacy organization committed to providing leadership in ways to make the North Bay sustainable, prosperous and innovative. As business and civic leaders, their goal is to ensure economic health by building more housing, improving mobility, promoting better education, and creating jobs to make our region a better place to live and work. Collectively, their members have over 25,000 employees.

GMH Builders Joins North Bay Leadership Council

North Bay Leadership Council (NBLC) announces that GMH Builders has joined the Council. GMH Builders Inc. is a Sonoma-based general contractor focused on commercial, healthcare, education, hospitality, high-tech, multi-family, and residential estate construction. GMH Builders is dedicated to meeting the needs of the ever-changing North Bay market. Their commitment to delivering exceptional service, adhering to budgets and schedules, and ensuring quality results in satisfied clients. GMH specializes in handling projects which are too complex for many small construction firms but not large enough to be competitive for bigger firms' best resources.

NBLC Board Chair Jordan Lavinsky, Partner, Hanson Bridgett said, "We welcome GMH Builders who build great projects and stronger communities by providing needed facilities and improvements while supporting community nonprofits in the North Bay. GMH Builders will greatly contribute to NBLC's work on improving the region's housing, education, healthcare, and economic vitality."

GMH Builders was established to cater to the construction management and general contracting needs of Northern California communities. Their goal is to build projects leading to positive community development, foster positive relationships with businesses and individuals, and surpass the expectations of clients and partners on every project. GMH Builders can accommodate projects of various sizes, from tenant improvements and renovations to large-scale projects, while ensuring consistent quality of service. To achieve this, GMH Builders is dedicated to enhancing their personnel, procedures, and technologies. This is why they coined their motto of "Building for Life."

The NBLC member representative is Seth Maze, Co-Founder and CEO. Seth Maze said, “GMH Builders wants to be part of a team like NBLC that shares our goals and values of making the North Bay the best place to live and work. We look forward to working together to ensure the North Bay has the housing and facilities it needs to thrive and provides a bright future for our children.”

Seth has 25 years of experience in the industry, having worked on projects worth nearly \$1 billion. He started as a part-time Carpenter during his academic years before moving on to construction management, where he has spent 20 years honing his skills. Seth has built a network of industry professionals, and he is well-versed in construction methods, personnel management, scheduling, coordination, estimating, value engineering, constructability, legal aspects, and cost controls. His entrepreneurial spirit drives him, and he is passionate about running a sophisticated construction company. Seth holds a Bachelor of Science in Construction Management from California State University, Chico. He is also accredited by the USGBC as a LEED AP, BD+C, OSHA 30 Hour, and First Aid Certified. Additionally, he was recently honored with the 40 Under 40 Award by Autodesk International and locally with the NBBJ.

Josh Grigg, GMH Builders’ Co-Founder and alternate member, has 25 years of experience in construction. He is a second-generation contractor who has worked in all areas of the field. Over the last 20 years, he has successfully managed projects worth up to \$40M. Josh's expertise lies in design-build and historic reuse/remodel projects. He is known for his friendly demeanor and ability to communicate with clients effectively. Josh holds a Bachelor of Science degree from California State University, Chico, and a Master's Degree in Construction Management from the University of Denver.

GMH Builders take their responsibility to the environment seriously. Their skilled teams use sustainable construction methods that are cost-effective when compared to traditional approaches. GMH works closely with clients to assess best green construction practices while identifying opportunities for long-term cost savings. As proud members of the AIA and USGBC members, they employ LEED Accredited Professionals who are committed to promoting environmentally responsible building practices.

GMH recently won North Bay Top Construction Projects awards for their Cherry Creek Village project in Cloverdale and the Russian River Health and Wellness Center in Guerneville. They are known for building healing environments for doctors and patients, including medical facilities and upgrades to existing hospital campuses such as Stanford Health Care, Marin Health Medical Center, Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital, North Bay Health Care, Sonoma Valley Hospital, and Queen of the Valley. They are also recognized for constructing many hospitality venues, such as MacArthur Place Hotel, Taub Family Outpost, Bear Republic Brew Pub, Sebastiani Theater, Mumm Visitor’s Center, and Kivelstadt Cellars.

GMH Builders takes pride in being responsible members of the communities where they work and reside. Their core values include a strong commitment to giving back and assisting others. They proudly support several organizations, including the Rotary Club of Sonoma Valley, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Sonoma Valley United Youth Soccer, Sonoma County 4H, MarinHealth's Mt. Tam Society, Future Farmers of America, and Sonoma Valley Little League. This is just a small selection of the many groups they support.

Save the Date: NBLC's State of the North Bay Conference, October 12 – Ticket sales begin 9/13



2023 State of the North Bay Conference Planting the Seeds for Economic Growth



Jeff Bellisario
Executive Director

Bay Area Council Economic Institute



Abby Raisz
Research Manager

Bay Area Council Economic Institute

Get the latest on how the North Bay's economic ecosystem is faring from top research analysts at the Bay Area Council Economic Institute. Followed by a panel of successful North Bay entrepreneurs discussing the state of entrepreneurship in the North Bay. Don't miss out on getting this important information for your organization!

October 12, 2023 (Hosted on Zoom)

8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Tickets: \$25

Thank You to Our Sponsors



www.northbayleadership.org

NBLC Applauds Sonoma County and Two Cities for Achieving Pro-Housing Designations

In furtherance of California accelerates housing production, Governor Gavin Newsom announced that Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, and the Town of Windsor (as well as Long Beach and Moreno Valley) have been designated as Pro-housing communities. Through this designation, these jurisdictions are now eligible for funding incentives and additional resources through a state grant program designed to speed housing production. To date, a total of 27 California communities are now designated as Pro-housing.

Why it matters: To meet the needs of Californians and address our state's housing crisis, each local jurisdiction must take accountability to build their share of housing. To tackle this challenge, decades in the making, it will take a concerted effort between state and local leaders in partnership with nonprofits, advocates, and developers to enact Pro-housing policies.

What Governor Newsom said: "Every city and county across California needs to work together to tackle the state's housing crisis. Rather than evade their duties, these communities are committed to rolling up their sleeves and building more housing, faster. We are putting the needs of Californians first and seeing to it that more housing gets built throughout the state."

Jurisdictions that earn the Prohousing Designation have demonstrated a commitment to enacting policies to accelerate housing production. They have shown themselves to be partners with the state in combating the housing crisis. These partners recognize that increasing the availability of housing statewide is critical to bettering the quality of life for all Californians, and to ending homelessness.

"Expanding housing opportunities is critical for the social and economic well-being of working Californians, families with children, older adults, and people exiting homelessness," said Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency Secretary Lourdes Castro Ramírez. "Under Governor Newsom's leadership, we have provided more tools and incentives than ever before for communities to design policies and programs to build more housing in the right places."

Communities that earn the Prohousing Designation receive incentives such as additional points or other preferences in the scoring of competitive funding programs administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), giving them an advantage over other jurisdictions.

"Creative efforts to enhance state and local partnerships are essential to meeting ambitious and necessary state housing goals," said HCD Director Gustavo Velasquez. "We recognize today local governments that are breaking down barriers to affordable housing – and reward those good actors with incentives to enhance the work they are already doing."

The Prohousing Designation Program was established by the 2019-20 Budget Act, as part of a package of support, incentives, and accountability measures to help California meet its goal of building 2.5 million homes by 2030, with at least one million of those homes affordable to people at lower income levels.

For more information about the Prohousing Designation Program, please visit <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/>

Join NBLC in the Clean Air Challenge

North Bay Leadership Council has joined the Coalition for Clean Air's **Clean Air Day Challenge!** Clean Air Day is an annual event—celebrated on **Wednesday, October 4, 2023**—that raises awareness about the importance of clean air and encourages individuals, communities, and organizations to take steps to improve air quality. It serves as a platform to engage Californians in collective action to reduce air pollution, protect public health and connect with their communities. We encourage our member organizations and you to join us and challenge themselves to take the actions we know are essential to clean air, like taking transit, shopping locally, installing an air monitor, and much more. You can find out more at www.CleanAirDay.org.

SMART Cuts 31 Day Pass Pricing

The Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit District (SMART) has implemented a 15% reduction in the price of its 31-Day Pass, to \$117 for adults and \$58.50 for youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

SMART has reduced the price of the 31-Day Pass in response to a survey conducted by the Bay Area Council which indicated that more than half of Bay Area employees are working a hybrid remote schedule.

Post-pandemic ridership on SMART confirms the findings of the study. While SMART has recovered over 90% of its pre-pandemic ridership, the agency has seen a 50% reduction in the demand for monthly passes. The reduced 31-Day Pass pricing is based on the “new normal” hybrid work schedule of a 3-day per week commute but is still valid for unlimited rides during the 31 days.

SMART’s 31-Day Pass is available with a Clipper card and can be purchased at Clipper vending machines located on all SMART train station platforms and at all North Bay transit customer service windows, including SMART’s Administrative Office at 5401 Old Redwood Highway, Suite 200, Petaluma CA.

Members in the News

PG&E Holds Bilingual 811, Safety Workshop at Graton Day Labor Center

North Coast PG&E team spent the morning in Graton, a small town 10 miles west of Santa Rosa, to speak with a group of day workers on the importance of calling 811 before any digging project, as well as the safety clearance around overhead electric powerlines.

Exchange Bank is Included as One of the Bay Area’s Top Corporate Philanthropists for the Second Year in a Row

The San Francisco Business Times top 100 list of companies is based on the percentage of charitable cash contributions relative to the company’s income before taxes.

Providence Sonoma County, Sutter Health, and Kaiser Permanente All Recognized by U.S. News as Best Regional Hospitals

We recognize that it’s not always possible to travel distances to receive ongoing care, therefore U.S. News created the Best Regional Hospitals which ranks hospitals in both states and major metro areas and recognizes hospitals in every region of the country.

BioMarin's Gene Therapy for Hemophilia A Approved by United States FDA

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Thursday approved BioMarin Pharmaceutical's (BMRN.O) gene therapy for severe hemophilia A, the company said, giving patients with the inherited bleeding disorder an alternative to regular injections of missing blood proteins.

Northern California Public Media Purchases New Headquarters Location

Congratulations on purchasing your new headquarters!

Sonoma Valley Hospital Lauded for Social Responsibility

A national nonprofit think tank has recognized Sonoma Valley Hospital with an "A" grade for social responsibility, putting it in the top 1% of 3,637 hospitals ranked, the community hospital recently announced.

Keysight Visits White House as Tech Firms Pitch in Effort to Craft Smart-Device Safety Standards

Keysight Technologies is participating in the development of a national cybersecurity labeling program that sets the safety standard for smart devices, ranging from refrigerators and microwaves to televisions and fitness devices.

Santa Rosa Junior College Invites Community to the Polly O'Meara Doyle Hall Ribbon Cutting

Please join Santa Rosa Junior College for the ribbon cutting ceremony of our new affordable student housing community – the Polly O'Meara Doyle Hall Student Housing, on Friday, September 8 at 3pm.

Sonoma County Winegrowers Leadership Academy Vineyard Workers Honored in Washington D.C.

This month 31 graduates of the Voz de los Viñedos' (Voice of the Vineyard) Leadership Academy were honored in Washington D.C. Congressman Mike Thompson helped to organize the event and Alaska Airlines provided the 'gift of flight.'



Who We Are

Over thirty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 54 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call 707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org

www.northbayleadership.org