

## **THE QUESTION OF TIBURON**

### **1. Has there been opposition to MERA?**

Citizens in San Rafael sued both MERA and the city of San Rafael over the adequacy of its certified Environmental Impact Report. The courts ruled in favor of MERA. However, a delay of over a half-year and hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional costs accrued because of the suit.

### **2. Is there current opposition?**

There is currently controversy to the approved antenna site in Southern Marin. MERA evaluated 19 potential locations and selected the MMWD water tank parcel on Mt. Tiburon Road as the site, guaranteeing complete coverage of southern Marin and minimizing visual impact. The two-year neighborhood opposition to the Mt. Tiburon site has resulted in two things: 1) MERA has searched for a suitable alternative, including Angel Island and Wolfback Ridge, both of which were deemed inadequate or unavailable; 2) the City of Tiburon identified an alternative site at Sugar Loaf Drive, also the site of a MMWD water tank. The neighbors on Sugar Loaf Drive have expressed opposition to that site also, resulting in significant delays.

### **3. What is the town of Tiburon's position?**

Tiburon's MERA representative voted in favor of the Mt. Tiburon Road location in 2000, but the Town's Planning Commission denied the Conditional Use Permit to construct the antenna facility on Mt. Tiburon due to neighborhood opposition. The city suggested the Sugar Loaf site, as the superior location, despite more neighborhood opposition. In the meantime, MERA purchased the land at Mt. Tiburon Road and will begin construction at that site if the Sugar Loaf parcel is not approved by the Town Council.

The Town of Tiburon, the Tiburon Fire Protection District and the Southern Marin Fire Authority are among the members of the Authority. In 1999, \$27 million in bonds were issued to pay for the system. The Town is currently paying off its share of the bonds.

#### **4. What are the requirements for coverage in Tiburon?**

In order to effectively cover Southern Marin County and fully operate the whole system, the Southern Marin site must be built at a high enough elevation to provide the required coverage in the difficult terrain in South Marin.

In the original Authority site analysis, there were 19 sites considered in South Marin. Most of the original sites were eliminated due to inadequate coverage or land use prohibitions. The Mt. Tiburon site was selected with the Sugarloaf site as the "alternative" site. An EIR was completed with these two locations for South Marin.

Both the Mt. Tiburon and Sugar Loaf sites are located in a residential neighborhood. There are two other sites in the system that are located within residential neighborhoods, however, the distance from the other sites to the nearest residence is far greater. For example, with both Tiburon sites, the antenna facility is within 75 feet of the building structure. In San Rafael, at the Forbes Hill site, the distance to the nearest home is approximately 300 feet; at the Dollar Hill site, the distance to the nearest home is approximately 1200 feet.

#### **5. What does the proposed MERA Southern Marin facility look like?**

The proposed Southern Marin site would include:

- 10' x 20' electronics housing structure
- 45 kw generator
- 500 gallon propane fuel tank
- 47 foot monopole with a 10 foot whip on top along with two transmit antennas and a 4 foot microwave dish

#### **6. What other sites were explored in Tiburon?**

The project description in the EIR identified the Mt. Tiburon site as the primary site and the Sugar Loaf site as the alternative site. However, MERA and the Town Council have actively been seeking workable sites and explored the following:

### Angel Island

MERA and the Town worked with State Park Service to locate an antenna on Angel Island. Despite several attempts to persuade them, the Park Service was not receptive to locating the antenna anywhere on the island. Also, the bureaucratic hurdles to appeal this decision would take years. It would also require an amendment to the EIR, which would require an excessive time delay.

### Wolfback Ridge (Sausalito)

A complete study was undertaken by MERA at Tiburon's request on the Wolfback Ridge antenna farm located in the hills above Sausalito. The technical study that was completed showed that this site could not provide the required coverage in downtown Sausalito. It would also require an amendment to the EIR and a County permit, which the Authority concluded would require an excessive time delay.

### St. Hilary's Open Space

The St. Hilary's Open Space was acquired by the Marin County Open Space District in 1995 and 1997. Using that parcel as a site for an antenna facility would require approval of the County. Further, because it is inconsistent with the concept of open space, it would be highly unlikely that the County would allow it. It would also require a lengthy amendment to the EIR and a general plan amendment.

### Gilmartin Open Space

The Town-owned open space was seriously considered by the Town Council and subsequently rejected. In order to meet the technical standards required of the system, the Town Council rejected the site because the tower would be too tall (over 100') and difficult to service with the required utilities. It would also require an amendment to the EIR and a general plan amendment.

### Ring Mountain Open Space

This site was considered in the original site analysis but was rejected for technical coverage reasons. It would also require an amendment to the EIR and a general plan amendment.

**7. Are there currently antennas on the Sugar Loaf site that emit RF energy?**

There are currently 9 antennas mounted on the Sugar Loaf water tank that are being used by various local government agencies. Of them, 6 are omni-directional transmission antennas and 3 are receive-only antennas. The omni-directional transmission antennas emit the RF energy in a concentric circle pattern.

**8. What are the RF energy measurements for Mt. Tiburon and Sugar Loaf?**

The maximum ambient levels anywhere at the house southwest of the Mt. Tiburon site are expected to be 21.5% of the applicable public limit. RF levels for the Sugarloaf site are being studied at this time.

**9. If the site were approved and constructed at Sugar Loaf, could the Town prevent the creation of an "antenna farm"?**

The Town Council could condition any issuance of a permit to restrict the antennas on any site to just one. MERA would agree with this condition.

**10. What happens if the Town Council rejects the Sugar Loaf site?**

If the Town Council rejects the Sugar Loaf site, MERA will exercise its authority to initiate construction on the Mt. Tiburon site.