



Promoting accountable, cost-effective and efficient government and opposing unnecessary taxes and spending



August 2020

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CoCoTax President's Report – August 2020

CoCoTax Virtual Speaker Series via Zoom / YouTube Channel

Exciting news! Not only does CoCoTax continue to sponsor excellent speakers (lockdown or not), each presentation is recorded now via ZOOM! The recordings are available for replay whenever you want. Videos are available on our website at <https://www.cocotax.org/videos>, and also available to view on our new YouTube channel: [CoCoTax YouTube Channel](#)

We WOULD ask a favor – go to our YouTube Channel and subscribe (it's free!) [YouTube](#) Once we have a hundred subscribers, YouTube provides us with more exposure and additional options to be more efficient. Help us promote our brand...please subscribe and spread the word.

Recent speakers have been BART Board Director Debora Allen, Contra Costa County Supervisor Candace Anderson, Mike McGill and Emily Barnett from the Central Sanitary District, Susan Kirsch on CA Housing Legislation in 2020, Ashley Louisiana, Judith Silver & Jen Faught for RecycleSmart, and Jack Weir giving us a brief on Rent Control and a Primer on Prop 13. We even went into the archives for an older video (May 2012) by Erik Bruvold discussing Project Labor Agreements (PLA's), a topic still pertinent today.

Our upcoming August virtual meetings all via ZOOM!

- Friday, August 21 at noon – Rhovy Lyn Antonio, California Apartment Association
- Monday, August 24 at noon – Executive Team meeting
- Friday, August 28 at noon – General membership meeting – Ballot measures

Just register online and we will send you the direct link for each presentation. Our ability to provide speakers via ZOOM and YouTube is in part due to the generosity of our supporters through our Spring Appeal. The financial struggle of the COVID shutdown was a bit relieved and we are delighted to be able to communicate with you in this fashion.

COVID-19 in Contra Costa

Current information from CCC Health Dept:
<https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org>



Susan L Pricco
President, Contra Costa Taxpayers Association
"Good government at affordable cost"

Upcoming Ballot Measures

COVID-19 has given us our fair share of challenges, but it won't keep us from our mission of good government at affordable cost. Over the next month, you can be sure we will be researching the issues and sending our conclusions to you. Ballot positions will be on our website shortly with "white paper" explanations on most. To see what has been filed locally for the November election (final filing date 8/7/2020, go to:

[Contra Costa County Measures Working List](#)

Contact CoCoTax

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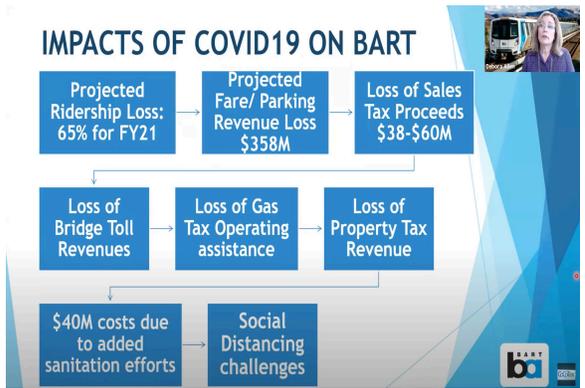
Speaker Rhovy Lyn Antonio, CAA

Upcoming CoCoTax speaker will be Rhovy Lyn Antonio, Vice President of Public Affairs for the California Apartment Association (CAA). Rhovy will provide a briefing on Rental Housing Issues and other local and state legislative issues, including an update on Prop 21 (statewide rent control) that will appear on the ballot this November.



She manages local public and legislative affairs in San Mateo and Contra Costa counties. Prior to joining CAA, she served as chief of staff for former San Jose Councilman Pete Constant and worked for the city of San Jose for eight years managing land use policies and community development issues. Rhovy holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from San Jose State University.

BART Update from Board Director Debora Allen



Impact from Covid-19

BART has 131 miles of track and transports 148 million per year; but, is now facing a huge financial crisis due to the COVID pandemic. A combination of factors has drastically cut revenues. Fares are the largest source of revenue (15%) and ridership is down. As commuting is lessened, bridge toll revenue is lessened. Some help came from the CARES Act (\$377 Million), which is approximately 15% of the normal BART budget of \$2.37 Billion. In response, BART has cut service frequency to mirror lower ridership. As much as possible has been cut from operating costs. San Francisco's recovery is key to increasing ridership. However, as many companies have allowed employees to work from home, this may have a long-lasting impact. All cars now are sanitized each night with hospital grade disinfectants.

Rebuilding BART

A new control system has been installed allowing trains to safely run more frequently. BART has added twelve new 10-car trains and has more secure fare gates to deter fare evasion which costs \$27 to \$57 million per year.

Policing BART

Currently there are 181 BART police officers. Independent consultants advise an increase. The majority of Directors are reluctant to increase the number of police, preferring instead to redirect some officers' duties to social work. Crime has not actually declined; but, is about proportionate to ridership. BART has added a crew of BART "Ambassadors" that have no policing power but are there to create a greater feeling of safety. We at CoCoTax are concerned about the safety of those ambassadors.



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Report on Central San

Mike McGill and Emily Barnett from Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, spoke to CoCoTax via ZOOM on July 31, 2020. Several topics were discussed during this hour plus presentation. This article covers two topics discussed by Mike and Emily.

To Flush or Not to Flush: Impact of Non-Flushable Items

One major problem Central Sanitary faces comes from people flushing things down toilets other than human waste and toilet tissue. Especially today with COVID, masks, gloves and sanitary wipes are being flushed by people not realizing the problems this creates. As these items are not designed to dissolve, they build up in pipes and can block sewage pumps. Such blockages cause sewage to back up into streets, waterways or even into homes. Blockages in pipes require crews using equipment to clear them. Blockages in pumps require disassembly and manual removal by a worker. Again, both can result in backflows. This type of extra maintenance costs about \$54 million per year. To increase awareness of this problem Central San has outreach informational programs for K-12 schools. They also have promoted the passage of California AB-1672. This measure would require manufacturers to clearly mark containers and wipes as not to be flushed.

Central San Sustainable Farm

An incredible project involving Central San, is the Sustainable Farm, created in 2012. A 14.8-acre farm, in conjunction with the 501(c)(3) AgLantis, using empty buffer land, recycled wastewater and improving the soil with organic matter, the Farm now produces thousands of pounds of fresh organic produce that is provided free to local schools and food pantries. They have expanded into educating school children about agriculture, the value of cover crops in air quality, and getting hands-on experience in the field. "The CoCo San Sustainable Farm has a quadruple bottom line: Food Equity, Education, Job Training and Economic Development".

Meet Denise Sheehan - Office Manager for CoCoTax



If you ever have had the opportunity to contact our office in the last couple of years, you were probably greeted by the welcoming voice of Denise Sheehan. She has been an invaluable asset to the operation of our organization. Our office is currently closed due to COVID-19, so she works remotely, managing her household and CoCoTax business, correspondence, communications, event reservations and coordinating our activities. She will be checking in guests when we can once again meet in public places for meetings and events.

In addition to her duties at CoCoTax, Denise, a gifted fabric artist and expert quilter, is also an entrepreneur inasmuch as she has businesses of her own. *A Graceful Stitch* features her own unique quilting patterns, but she also sells and instructs for *Chalk Couture*. You can see her on her on Facebook page DIY Denise for some of her craft projects. Denise is also the proud "grandmother" to Dug, a golden retriever puppy and mother to two adult daughters.

Hers is the voice on the voice mail at the CoCoTax office. Reach her at denise@cocotax.org for the quickest response.

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