

## MAR-GJARA Pre-Merger

# Q&A

Q.

**I've heard that the GJARA and MAR associations are considering a merger, is that true?**

Yes, the leadership teams for each association have met and continue to assess and explore the business and industry circumstances, opportunities and challenges associated with a potential merger of the respective associations. Although no definitive plans have been made, our discussions continue and updates will be communicated to the membership on an ongoing basis.

Q.

**How far into the merger discussion are the Boards?**

Members of the Board of Directors for the Grand Junction Area REALTOR® Association and the Montrose Association of REALTORS® have held preliminary discussions regarding a possible merger of the two associations. A merged Association would include the two associations joining together and will be considered through a process that takes into consideration the unique size and resources each Association brings to the table. Leadership team members understand how vitally important it is to be as open and proactive with our communication to members as possible however, certain aspects of Board discussions and select decisions must be tempered with privacy and confidentiality to help ensure the best outcome for our members. As the leaders you elected for your association, we have taken on that responsibility and commitment to protect the operations, leadership, financial stability, long-term viability and overall strength of GJARA and MAR.

Q.

**What are the advantages of a merger for our members?**

The primary advantages of a merged association include being a growing organization that can continue to provide and expand upon the delivery of programming and services including advocacy, education, professional standards, community engagement, leadership development, research and market data. In addition, we believe that there are cost savings to be gained through staffing, technology, vendor relations, logistics, events and more. Again, we believe that unification of our associations at this time may allow us to shape our future on our terms while continuing to stay ahead of both the industry competition and requirements of our state and national association partners.

# Q.

## **Why are the boards considering this unification?**

We believe that unification of our associations at this time could allow us to shape our future on our terms while continuing to stay ahead of both the industry competition and requirements of our state and national association partners. Focused on our leadership charge, including fiscal responsibilities and service to our members, we are working to be forward thinking, proactive visionaries prepared to take on industry challenges and opportunities to protect and grow our association for our members and create a position of strength for our combined membership across the region.

Our board leadership and Merger Taskforce members are exploring potential options and conducting their due diligence on a wide range of options designed to:

1. Secure, develop and deliver a full-suite of services, programming, education, advocacy and more that our members deserve;
2. Allow us to secure additional financial stability for years to come;
3. Merge our operations and full member services with a business model that supports and can grow the delivery of all core member services; and
4. Maintain the level of resources, including building presence that allows for in-person meetings, events, as well as the member and community engagement that is a part of our history and culture.

# Q.

## **Are all Board members of each Association in agreement with the idea of a merger and the plan of action that you are taking?**

Despite potential individual differences of opinion, we are committed to working on your behalf with one clear voice and actions that reflect honesty, integrity and truthfulness. In this case, our board of directors is in favor of exploring all options, benefits and obstacles associated with a merger between GJARA and MAR and bringing that information to the membership before any decision is made.

# Q.

## **How would a merger impact our affiliate members?**

If the decision is made to move forward, we anticipate productive discussions between leadership and affiliates in both areas will help the merger take shape in an agreeable way.

# Q.

## **Does a merger proposal have to be voted on by the membership of the association? What does that process entail?**

Yes, any merger proposal requires the approval of the membership of the respective organizations and that is why we are working to share all of the important details, including bylaw requirements, and answer member questions prior to any formal merger presentation and vote. The full details and timeline for that process will be shared with our members as it develops.

Q.

**Will my dues be increasing?**

We do not anticipate an increase in dues for either association. Fortunately, both associations continue to operate from very sound financial positions. With ownership of building assets and no debt, a combined association could deliver an even higher level of service and programming to our combined membership at the same or possibly even lower membership rates

Q.

**What happens to the Association buildings? Where would the combined Association be headquartered?**

At this time, the Merger Taskforce is exploring the full scope of options available for the headquarters, satellite office and/or meeting space locations necessary to service the expanded geographic area of our combined membership for classes, in-person meetings and more.

Q.

**How would a Unified Association be staffed?**

We anticipate a full evaluation of the current, understaffed scenarios for both GJARA and MAR and would be making decisions based on the current and newly defined needs of a combined association including operations and administration, marketing communications, technology, fundraising, community outreach, and more.

Q.

**Who would sit on the Board of Directors for a merged Association?**

The initial Board of Directors for a merged Association could be comprised of the existing Board members for both GJARA and MAR. Members of the Unification Taskforce will further examine how that Board makeup could develop over the years following a merger to ensure fair representation of the membership.

Q.

**If the Associations merge, how will you protect and preserve the long-standing history and culture of our respective Associations?**

As a unified Board, we would be fully committed to the mission and vision of the two associations and that includes doing everything we can to protect the traditions, culture, products, services, look and feel of those Associations. The history, culture and heritage of each will continue to be told through the people, stories and accomplishments of our respective Associations.

Q.

**What will be the name of the new Association?**

At this point, the Merger Taskforce is fully focused on assessing the opportunities, challenges and benefits of a merger for our respective memberships. We would look to evaluate options for a combined Association name if and when our members approve a merger by vote.

Q.

**How would a merger impact the role and use of the two current MLS providers?**

We understand and are focused on the important role our MLS providers deliver to our membership and we are working to ensure that the options, resources and services you have a history and comfort level with will remain in place. We do not anticipate that access to your preferred MLS service would be hindered as a result of a merger.

Q.

**If approved by members, when would the merger take effect?**

No timeline or deadline has been set by the Association leadership or Merger Taskforce at this point in the discussions. However, it is realistic to believe that the due diligence, member communication, vote and initial implementation could be in place by Q4 2021, if it goes forward.

Q.

**What are the next steps in this process?**

Following the due diligence of the Merger Taskforce, as well as discussions with members of each association, if the leadership teams believe that moving forward is the best course of action, they will create a merger proposal detailing the delivery of benefits, programs, services, amenities, leadership, staffing and resources that would be available to each of our members and industry partners. In addition, the Boards will also discuss an association business model that would be implemented if a merger proposal is voted down by the members and the challenges, needs and outlook if we remain operating as separate associations.

Q.

**What happens if the membership does not vote in favor of the proposed merger?**

Board and Association leadership will go back to the drawing board to assess next steps and the feasibility of continuing to operate the Association independently.

Q.

**Were any other boards approached and/or considered to be included in this merger?**

At this time, the only merger discussions taking place are between GJARA and MAR.

Q.

**When can we expect to hear more?**

In the coming weeks and months, we will continue to be transparent and share facts and information with our membership in a timely fashion as we discuss and work through these opportunities and possible future plans. Please know that we are always available to talk with our members and answer questions you may have. As a part of that commitment, we've created this FAQ document which will be updated and shared as next steps unfold.

Q.

**Are we the only board discussing a merger?**

While we don't always know when merger discussions are in the works, if one is approved we know once it has been announced. South Metro Denver REALTOR® Association (SMDRA) and Aurora Association of REALTORS® merged in 2020. Most recently an announcement was made that Boulder Area REALTOR® Association and Longmont Association of REALTORS® completed a merger a couple of weeks ago.

Q.

**Which members are a part of the Merger Taskforce and Sub Taskforces that are working to research how the merger may take shape if it is approved by membership?**

**Merger Taskforce**

Debi Harmon

Tyler Harris

Ann Hayes

Ruth Kinnett

Jimmy Kleager

Lee Ann Parden

Amanda Potter

Gary Rawls

Joe Tripoli

Mark Wingerter

Michelle Martinez

Aaron Tobler