



SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

Department: City Manager

Prepared by: Cristine Alilovich,
Assistant City Manager

City Manager Approval: _____

TOPIC: CANAL POLICY WORKING GROUP

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION TO PURSUE BOLD, COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT PLACE EQUITY AT THE FOREFRONT OF OUR EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACTS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS HAVING ON OUR MOST MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES, LOCAL BUSINESSES AND PROPERTY OWNERS

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution to pursue bold, collaborative solutions that place equity at the forefront of our efforts to address the disproportionate impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on our most marginalized communities, local businesses, and property owners.

BACKGROUND:

On August 14, 2020, a coalition of organizations led by the Canal Alliance, Community Action Marin, and Legal Aid of Marin and representing community, health, education, and business sectors sent a letter (Attachment 2) to the elected officials of the City of San Rafael and the County of Marin that highlighted the disproportionate impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the low-income Latinx community in San Rafael and across the County, and urged officials to take swift action to address this crisis. The letter emphasized that, from the state to national level, studies have identified the inequitable impacts of COVID-19 and its effect on critical issues such as housing, employment, debt, economic stability and food security.

The coalition stressed that many of those who have been most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 are essential workers and that the recovery and long-term resilience of these communities are inextricably connected to the recovery and resilience of the local business sector, the non-profit sector and the public sector. Only by also emphasizing local business recovery can we viably stabilize our region. Furthermore, building the capacity of communities across the County to recover from the pandemic is also an opportunity to build capacity for the next community emergency, whether an earthquake, fire, flooding, or a new pandemic. The coalition invited the City and County to work

FOR CITY CLERK ONLY

File No.: _____

Council Meeting: _____

Disposition: _____

collaboratively with staff and leaders to address these urgent challenges and to work swiftly towards a path to recovery that puts equity front and center.

On August 17, City and County elected officials and staff from both jurisdictions met with representatives from the coalition to discuss opportunities for rapid, collaborative action. Following this meeting, members of the coalition developed a set of specific recommendations for elected officials (Attachment 3) in the policy areas of health, housing and supporting the recovery of local businesses. In addition, they also recommended the creation of a Policy Task Force/Working Group.

On September 18, the Canal Policy Working Group (CPWG) convened for the first time. The CPWG includes Vice Mayor Kate Colin, Cristine Alilovich, and Catherine Quffa, City of San Rafael; Supervisor Dennis Rodoni, Lorenzo Cordova, and Angela Nicholson, County of Marin; Omar Carrera and Ricardo Huerta Niño, Canal Alliance; Chandra Alexander, Community Action Marin; and Steffanie Haffner, Legal Aid of Marin. Since then, the CPWG is meeting on a weekly basis to further explore the health, housing and local business policy initiatives. In addition, staff from all the agencies represented on the CPWG, are working together collaboratively toward researching, analyzing and developing specific actionable solutions for consideration by the County Board of Supervisors and the City of San Rafael City Council in the near future.

ANALYSIS:

The CPWG's initial focus is to prioritize the coalition's recommendations and to identify what could be done quickly, while working in parallel on more long-term solutions. The CPWG wants to ensure that our efforts build upon, rather than duplicate, existing initiatives. Additionally, the CWPG is also focusing on policy solutions that would provide broad and long-lasting benefits to those most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. On October 26 the coalition sent a follow up letter (Attachment 4) that summarizes recent activities and progress to date.

The CPWG members expressed the urgency of having both the City and County leadership swiftly and formally articulate their support and commitment to these efforts. To that end, the CWPG members co-created the attached Resolution (English and Spanish versions found in Attachment 1) for consideration by both the San Rafael City Council and the Marin County Board of Supervisors.

This resolution represents the commitment to address this crisis with urgency, however, recognizes that any policy-level changes would take some time to properly develop, vet, and move through the approval process.

The Resolution recognizes that the history and contemporary manifestations of racial injustice have resulted in deeply unequal access to quality housing, employment, healthcare, education, resources, and opportunities, resulting in pockets of communities woefully susceptible to the deepest impacts of this unprecedented pandemic and economic crisis. As a result, the COVID-19 pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on our historically marginalized and under-resourced communities of color, who are least able to overcome the deep challenges. Further, it recognizes that the recovery and resilience of our most impacted communities is closely linked to the recovery and resilience of our local businesses, non-profits, and the public sector.

The Resolution affirms City Council's commitment to supporting our historically marginalized residents who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and to working collaboratively to build longer-term solutions for recovery and resilience. It also articulates City Council's commitment to protect housing for our essential workers, preserving the ability for many community members to stay in their homes in San Rafael. An important tool to supporting this work is the allocation of Community Development Block

Grant (CDBG) CARES ACT Coronavirus funds, which is mentioned in the Resolution and is also presented in more detail in another staff report on the November 2nd City Council meeting agenda.

By adopting this Resolution, the City Council is formally demonstrating its commitment to finding bold, collaborative solutions that address the disproportionate impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on our communities, businesses and property owners. Although the immediate focus of this work is to address the emergency crisis brought on by COVID-19, it is not a stand-alone initiative, nor a long-term solution to address systemic racism. It will take continuous bold action by all sectors to truly make lasting change happen and put an end to racial injustices in this country.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate financial impact to this action.

OPTIONS:

The City Council has the following options to consider on this matter:

1. Adopt a resolution in support of bold, collaborative solutions to address the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Adopt resolution with modifications.
3. Direct staff to return with more information.
4. Take no action.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Adopt a resolution to pursue bold, collaborative solutions that place equity at the forefront of our efforts to address the disproportionate impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on our most marginalized communities, local businesses, and property owners.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution (English & Spanish versions)
2. Latinos and Pandemic Letter, August 14, 2020
3. Marin County Pandemic & Latinos Policy Task Force Letter, September 4, 2020
4. Update on Marin County Pandemic & Latinos Policy Task Force, October 26, 2020

RESOLUTION NO.

RESOLUTION OF THE SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL TO PURSUE BOLD, COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT PLACE EQUITY AT THE FOREFRONT OF OUR EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACTS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS HAVING ON OUR MOST MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES, LOCAL BUSINESSES AND PROPERTY OWNERS

WHEREAS, in Marin County and its jurisdictions, as with the nation, racial injustices and unequal access to housing, employment, healthcare, education, and resources have culminated in an unprecedented economic and public health crisis that disproportionately impacts people of color; and

WHEREAS, the City stands in solidarity with our community to acknowledge and address the structural racism that exists in our nation and in all aspects of society; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted our historically marginalized and under-resourced communities of color in Marin County, and whose contributions are critical to the success of our local and regional economies as they serve as our essential workers and clients to our local businesses; and

WHEREAS, as of October 15, 2020, the Latinx population makes up 16% of the County's total population but 67% of its COVID-19 cases; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 Disaster Relief Program, funded by the County, was designed to provide support to the low income residents in the County that have or are likely to have COVID-19; as of October 15, 2020, that program provided support to 689 residents, 89% of which were also primarily Spanish-speaking; and

WHEREAS, in April 2020, the County administered a rental debt relief program; within the first month the County received 1,500 requests for rental support, and paid \$3,059,359 to Marin residents in the greatest need; and

WHEREAS, the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19, demonstrated by the statistics above, have only reaffirmed the racial inequalities that exists in our County and have highlighted the urgent need to pursue bold, collaborative solutions that place equity at the forefront of our actions; and

WHEREAS, the data shows that the Latinx community in the San Rafael Canal neighborhood has been the epicenter of Marin's COVID-19 outbreak and the resulting economic impacts, yet the issue of equity and disparate impacts affects communities Countywide; and

WHEREAS, the initial efforts will be on addressing the economic and public health crises in the Canal neighborhood in San Rafael; this is a deliberate approach to provide a rapid response in the Census tracts where the COVID-19 outbreak has been the most severe; and

WHEREAS, the City supports the County's efforts towards ensuring that all Marin communities that are suffering from the disparate impacts of COVID-19, especially communities of color, will benefit from these actions.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN RAFAEL RESOLVES as follows:

The City Council affirms our commitment to:

1. Stand in solidarity with our community to acknowledge and address the structural racism that exists in our nation in all aspects of society such as health care, education, employment laws, housing, immigration, financial systems, criminal justice, prosecution and sentencing practices, and so much more. We recognize that supportive words are not enough to catalyze the healing, social change and racial equity needed to overcome decades of systemic racism. Work has been done to this end and it will continue; however, we need to do much more – and we need to do it now.
2. Take bold action for social justice and work together across our community to do our part in what is needed to both heal and to co-create solutions to address systemic racial injustice that pervade our society and community; elected officials have the perfect opportunity through their leadership positions to address the racial disparity in the County;¹ and
3. Support our historically marginalized residents in Marin County, who have been most impacted by systemic racism, disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and are also facing an urgent economic crisis of historic proportions; and
4. Protect housing for our essential workers and consider implementing additional programs that would support renters and other policies that will preserve the ability for many community members to stay living in their homes; and
5. Continue working with our community partners in a highly collaborative and expeditious manner to build longer-term solutions for recovery and resilience within our most disproportionately impacted communities and to develop and implement policies that address this crisis over the coming few months; and
6. Develop a methodology that allocates the majority of the new/supplemental Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, recently received from the State in the amount of \$1.7M, toward providing additional rental assistance and business support to our most historically marginalized communities and local businesses, which have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ 2017, *Race Counts: Advancing Opportunities for All Californians*, www.racecounts.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Race-Counts-Launch-Report-digital.pdf.

I, **LINDSAY LARA**, Clerk of the City of San Rafael, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly and regularly introduced and adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of said City held on Monday, the 2nd day of November 2020, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES: COUNCILMEMBERS:

NOES: COUNCILMEMBERS:

ABSENT: COUNCILMEMBERS:

LINDSAY LARA, City Clerk

Exhibit A: Spanish Translated Resolution

RESOLUCIÓN

RESOLUCIÓN DEL AYUNTAMIENTO DE SAN RAFAEL APOYANDO LA BÚSQUDA DE SOLUCIONES COLABORATIVAS QUE COLOCAN LA EQUIDAD AL FRENTE DE NUESTROS ESFUERZOS PARA ABORDAR LOS IMPACTOS DESPROPORCIONADOS QUE LA PANDEMIA DEL COVID-19 ESTÁ TENIENDO EN NUESTRAS COMUNIDADES, NEGOCIOS LOCALES Y PROPIETARIOS MÁS MARGINADOS

CONSIDERANDO QUE, en el condado de Marin y sus jurisdicciones, al igual que en la nación, las injusticias raciales y el acceso desigual a la vivienda, el empleo, la atención médica, la educación y los recursos han culminado en una crisis económica y de salud pública que afecta de manera desproporcionada a las personas de color; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, la Ciudad de San Rafael se solidarizan con nuestra comunidad para reconocer y abordar el racismo estructural que existe en nuestra nación y en todos los aspectos de la sociedad; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, la pandemia de COVID-19 ha afectado de manera desproporcionada a nuestras comunidades de color históricamente marginadas en el condado de Marin, y son fundamentales para el éxito de nuestras economías locales y regionales, ya que sirven como nuestros trabajadores y clientes esenciales para nuestros negocios locales; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, desde el 15 de octubre de 2020, la población latina representa el 16% de la población total del condado, pero el 67% de los casos de COVID-19; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, el Programa de Ayuda de Desastres de COVID-19, financiado por el Condado, fue diseñado para ofrecer apoyo a los residentes de bajos ingresos en el Condado que tienen o pueden tener COVID-19; desde el 15 de octubre de 2020, ese programa brindó apoyo a 689 residentes, el 89% de los cuales también eran principalmente hispanohablantes; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, en abril de 2020, el condado desarrolló un programa de alivio de la deuda de la renta; durante el primer mes, el condado recibió 1,500 solicitudes de apoyo para los inquilinos y a pagado \$2,751,173.88 a los residentes de Marin que más lo necesitaban; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, los impactos desproporcionados de COVID-19, demostrados por las estadísticas anteriores, solo han reafirmado las desigualdades raciales que existen en nuestro condado y han resaltado la necesidad urgente de buscar soluciones audaces y colaborativas que coloquen la equidad al frente de nuestras acciones; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, los datos muestran que la comunidad latina en el vecindario del Canal de San Rafael ha sido el epicentro del brote de COVID-19 en Marín y los impactos económicos resultantes; sin embargo, el tema de la equidad y los impactos dispares afectan a las comunidades de todo el condado; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, los esfuerzos iniciales estarán dirigidos para abordar las crisis económicas y de salud pública en la comunidad del Canal en San Rafael; este es un enfoque deliberado para proporcionar una respuesta rápida en las pistas del censo donde el brote de COVID-19 ha sido el más severo; y

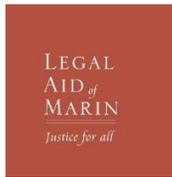
CONSIDERANDO QUE, es necesario garantizar que todas las comunidades de Marin que están sufriendo los impactos dispares del COVID-19, especialmente las comunidades de color, se beneficien de estas acciones.

AHORA, POR LO TANTO, EL AYUNTAMIENTO DE SAN RAFAEL RESUELVE lo siguiente:

EL AYUNTAMIENTO DE SAN RAFAEL, en colaboración con el Condado de Marin, afirma su compromiso a:

1. Solidaridad con nuestra comunidad para reconocer y abordar el racismo estructural que existe en nuestra nación en todos los aspectos de la sociedad, como la atención médica, la educación, las leyes laborales, la vivienda, la inmigración, los sistemas financieros, la justicia penal, las prácticas de procesamiento y sentencia. y mucho más. Reconocemos que las palabras de apoyo no son suficientes para catalizar la curación, el cambio social y la equidad racial necesarios para superar décadas de racismo sistémico. Se ha trabajado con este fin y continuará; sin embargo, debemos hacer mucho más, y debemos hacerlo ahora.
2. Tomar medidas audaces por la justicia social y trabajar juntos en toda nuestra comunidad para hacer nuestra parte en lo que se necesita tanto para sanar como para co-crear soluciones para abordar la injusticia racial sistémica que invade nuestra sociedad y comunidad; los funcionarios electos tienen la oportunidad perfecta a través de sus posiciones de liderazgo para abordar la disparidad racial en el condado; y
3. Apoyar a nuestros residentes históricamente marginados en el condado de Marin, quienes han sido los más afectados por el racismo sistémico, afectados de manera desproporcionada por la pandemia de COVID-19, y que también enfrentan una crisis económica urgente de proporciones históricas; y
4. Proteger las viviendas para nuestros trabajadores esenciales y considerar implementar programas adicionales que respalden a los inquilinos y otras políticas que preserven la capacidad de muchos miembros de la comunidad para permanecer viviendo en sus hogares; y
5. Continuar trabajando con nuestros socios comunitarios de una manera sumamente colaborativa y rápida para construir soluciones a largo plazo para la recuperación y la resiliencia dentro de nuestras comunidades más afectadas de manera desproporcionada y para desarrollar e implementar políticas que aborden esta crisis en los próximos meses; y
6. Desarrollar una metodología que asigne la mayoría de los fondos nuevos / suplementarios de la Subvención para el desarrollo comunitario (CDBG), recibidos recientemente del estado en la cantidad de \$ 1.7 millones, para ofrecer asistencia adicional para los inquilinos en nuestras comunidades históricamente más marginadas y empresas locales, que se han sido afectadas de manera desproporcionada por la pandemia de COVID-19.

**APROBADO Y ADOPTADO EN UNA REUNIÓN ORDINARIA DEL
AYUNTAMIENTO DE SAN RAFAEL CELEBRADA EL DÍA ____ DE _____
2020, POR EL SIGUIENTE VOTO:**



August 14, 2020
Via Electronic Mail

Mayor Gary Phillips
Members, San Rafael City Council
Members, Marin Board of Supervisors

Re: **Request for Action on Coronavirus Pandemic's Impact on Latinos in Marin County**

Dear Esteemed Elected Officials:

In the current coronavirus pandemic, Marin County has the largest disparity by race in the Bay Area among COVID-19 positive individuals. While Latinos are just 16% of the population, they account for approximately **80% of coronavirus cases**.

We, the undersigned leaders of community organizations in Marin County, respectfully request your immediate and full support to ensure appropriate action is taken to address the dire conditions that the COVID-19 pandemic has created for the low-income Latino community in San Rafael and across the County. We are committed to working with you, your staff, and agency leaders to address these matters with the urgency they require. As the present letter explains in further detail below, the Latino community in our County is experiencing an alarming and disproportionate impact because of the pandemic and related economic factors. Various recent reports and studies across the state and nationally have identified disparate effects in terms of COVID-19 cases, hospitalization, mortality, and the concomitant impact on already critical issues such as housing, employment, debt, economic stability, and food security.

We recognize the many existing efforts and appreciate the resources that have already been deployed. However, the growing number of cases and the severity of the impact has caused us to reach out to you for your leadership in devising a focused effort to address the inequitable impact on the most affected: low-income Latinos.

Given the clustering of so many of the county's cases in the Canal District, we strongly urge County and City leaders to begin by first declaring a *state of emergency*ⁱ for the neighborhood. This will allow for coordinated, expedited implementation of critically needed policies to get the outbreak under control. It will also help to provide the necessary support for recovery and stability. This crisis requires a collaborative effort, and we believe that a task force created, guided, and supported by City and County elected officials will help us arrive at better outcomes. We want quick action to develop an understanding of the conditions in the Canal and to determine priorities for short-, medium-, and long-term actions that must be taken.

As you know, the majority of adults in our Latino communities work in essential industries and sectors, and as such, our resilience and recovery will rely on their well-being and ability to weather the health and economic impacts of the pandemic. We ask that you move now to help lead us toward actions taken in partnership across the community to support our families, friends, and neighbors. We look forward to working with you to ensure that these pressing issues are addressed and respectfully request a response as soon as possible but no later than **August 21, 2020**.

Sincerely,

Omar Carrera
CEO Canal Alliance

Stephanie Haffner
ED Legal Aid of Marin

Chandra Alexandre
CEO Community Action Marin

CC:

California Assemblymember Marc Levine

California State Senator Mike McGuire

U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi

U.S. Senator Kamala Harris

U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein

U.S. Rep. Jared Huffman, D-California

Regional Director of Northern California, Office of the Governor, Elmy Bermejo

Marin County Public Health Director, Matt Willis, MD, MPH

San Rafael Community Development Director, Paul Jensen

San Rafael City Manager, Jim Schutz

Department of Health and Human Services for the County of Marin Director, Benita McClarin

Statement of Impact and Need: Action on Pandemic's Impact on Latinos in Marin County

Latinos across California are suffering disproportionately from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, at alarming rates, including high rates of co-morbidity and mortality. The context and characteristics of the Latino community in Marin County complicate our ability to fully understand the dynamics involved in these disparities as well as the necessary actions needed to effectively address these conditions. In order to develop effective solutions, and deploy the appropriate resources, and involve the relevant agencies and entities, we need an assessment to provide a comprehensive analysis of what happened and what the solutions are. To address the severe public health impact COVID-19 has had on our community and the related catastrophic economic hardships, we also request the special consideration be given to helping mitigate that impact on access to food, healthcare, affordable housing, job-related services and economic support, now and through our community's recovery.

Deep and Disproportionate Impact

Documentation of the disproportionate impact on San Rafael's low-income Latinos can be found in local news headlines such as, "Nearly 80% of Marin County COVID-19 cases are Latino, largest racial disparity in Bay Area" and includes the following data:

- Latinos make up 16% of Marin County's population, but account for almost 80% of coronavirus cases – the largest racial disparity of any Bay Area County.ⁱⁱ
- Over half of Marin County's cases are concentrated in the Canal.
- The Canal has a positivity rate of 20% -- roughly three times higher than Marin County's average.
- Lucia Martel-Dow, director of immigration and social services at the Canal Alliance, quoted in the press noted that 20% to 30% of tests in the community are coming back positive — far higher than the 7% rate countywide.ⁱⁱⁱ
- The socioeconomic factors that put Latinos at greater risk include lack of access to healthcare, low income, the inability to stop working, preexisting health conditions, and the dense living conditions.
- The local community support network is overextended: "Over the past few weeks, all of the Canal food pantries have seen an increase of at least three times the usual number of participants."^{iv}
- An estimated "14,000 to 15,000 **undocumented people** live in Marin" meaning that "thousands of people ... are not eligible for federal financial programs."^v Even when eligible, many are too afraid to risk seeking help, fearing deportation or the risk of losing the opportunity for immigration status in the future.

Best Practices and Models

A recent [PolicyLink report](#), calling for increased housing support for those impacted by the pandemic, notes that Alameda County acted to protect tenants "from most evictions through September, with a 12-month grace period to pay back rent without threat of eviction."^{vi} Community action in Massachusetts won "one of the strongest eviction and foreclosure moratoriums in the nation." Other state and national examples can help Marin County and the City of San Rafael craft innovative and reliable responses to secure protection and recovery. We know that what is most critically needed is the support and leadership of federal agencies and the current administration. Tragically, we also know we can't count on that help to be timely, sufficient, reliable, or sustained. We must rely on the leadership of state, local, and municipal governments to take on the immense and unavoidable challenge of devising locally-responsive models of action. As the PolicyLink report notes: "Ultimately, we need policies that value people over property. We value people by guaranteeing affordable, safe, and high-quality housing for all regardless of income. We do this by investing in public housing, community land trusts, and housing cooperatives."^{vii}

ⁱ Definition of Local Emergency: "The duly proclaimed existence of conditions of disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the territorial limits of a county, city and county, or city, caused by such conditions as ... epidemic ... or other conditions, ... which are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of that political subdivision and require the combined forces of other political subdivisions to combat..." Cal. Gov. Code Section 8558(c).

ⁱⁱ ABC7. 7/22/2020.

ⁱⁱⁱ San Francisco Chronicle "Richer, whiter Bay Area cities got coronavirus testing quickly. Low-income areas didn't." 7/26/2020

^{iv} Marin Independent Journal. "For Marin's Latino communities, pandemic intensifies poverty." 4/25/2020.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} Jamila Henderson. 2020. "Prioritize People over Profits, and Ban Evictions." PolicyLink.

^{vii} Ibid.

Signatories:

Ralph Gonzales, MD
Chief Innovation Officer, UCSF Health

Joshua Adler, MD
Chief Clinical Officer, UCSF Health

Felecia Gaston
Executive Director, Performing Stars of Marin

Bruce Lee Livingston
ED/CEO Alcohol Justice

Cheryl Paddack
CEO, North Marin Community Services

Ann Mathieson
ED, Marin Promise Partnership

David Wain Coon, Ed.D.
Superintendent/President, College of Marin

Jonathan Eldridge
Vice President, Student Learning, College of Marin

Douglas Mundo
Executive Director, Multicultural Center of Marin

Mary B. Marcy
President, Dominican University of California

Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH
CEO, Marin Community Clinics

Dr. Melissa Cadet
ED, Marin City Community Development Corporation

Joanne Webster
President and CEO, San Rafael Chamber of Commerce

Stephanie K. Plante
Chair, East San Rafael Working Group

Julia van der Ryn
ED, Center for Community Engagement Dominican
University

Anderson Silveira
Charter President, Rotary Club of San Rafael Evening

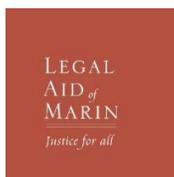
Sam Cobbs
President, Tipping Point Community

Jim Hogeboom
Superintendent, San Rafael City Schools

Mary Jane Burke
Superintendent, Marin County Schools

Balandra Fregoso, LCSW
ED, Parent Services Project

Saga Apostol
Chair, Marin Latino Leaders



September 4, 2020

Mayor Gary Phillips
Members, San Rafael City Council
Members, Marin Board of Supervisors

Via Electronic Mail

Re: Marin County Pandemic & Latinos Policy Task Force

Dear Esteemed Elected Officials:

First, thank you all for your current efforts to address the deep impacts of the pandemic across our communities. Thank you also for your willingness to more closely examine our current response and consider strategies to improve existing efforts for effectively addressing the urgent challenges faced by neighborhoods, communities, and businesses with the highest rates of infection and the lowest resources needed to overcome the impact.

We thank you for your strong support and partnership as we craft a collaborative rapid response model. While we recognize the role of the State in providing leadership and resources, we also recognize that the level of action from state agencies must be understood to be the ground: the basic, essential support needed for minimal survival, and at the same time, a kind and level of support that regrettably is allowing far too many to fall through the safety net. In Marin County, we have the opportunity, and responsibility, to respond with a more robust and effective model for containing infections and driving a speedy economic recovery.

In partnership with several key local service and advocacy organizations and leaders of the local business community, and informed by leading regional efforts in Oakland and San Francisco, we have developed the present outline of the key areas of action that we believe can get the work moving forward quickly and in the right direction for the most immediate, widespread, and sustainable impact. As we noted in the August 17th conference call, our immediate attention is toward the short-term activities desperately needed to contain transmission and provide immediate economic and nutritional relief. These first steps are informed by initial brainstorming around mid to long term strategies to sustain the recovery through the post-pandemic period.

Critical Work for Support & Recovery

Our collaborative team has put together the following recommendations to initiate and guide the efforts of the **Policy Task Force**. Below are a set of recommendations that build on existing work and draw from a series of successful response models from across the country and neighboring counties. We want to emphasize this “best practices” aspect of the recommendations to assure all stakeholders that these are strategies, measures, and policies that have been vetted and implemented by practitioners, elected officials, agency staff, and communities. Additionally, the priority focus is on health, housing, and local businesses. While there are opportunities to also work on several other related issues and challenges, the team has identified **health, housing, and local businesses** as the most urgent and strategic priorities. As the work develops, we expect priorities to shift as a result of presumable success, opening the opportunity to lend support to the work in other areas.

Short-Term Priorities, Policies, & Strategies

Policy Task Force. The first and most urgent step in these efforts is to establish a team of leaders to provide the vision and implementation of these efforts through a multi-sector public, private, nonprofit **Policy Task Force**. As was noted in our conference call, there are major efforts and committees already assigned to manage the many aspects of the work addressing the impact of the pandemic in the county and in our cities. As we also noted, however, the extreme and continuing disparities among low-income Latinos, in both the rate of infection and the economic impact, demand a more direct and focused approach to respond to the unique challenges and opportunities in these communities. Our inability to bring the infection rates down to match the rates among the broader population demands that we get creative and more deeply invested in solutions.

To these ends, the **Policy Task Force** we envision would be authorized to act within the state of emergency context in order to expedite decision-making processes for implementing changes in programs, policies, and procedures. In this aspect, we ask for your input and guidance for what powers can be granted to the Policy Task Force to act expeditiously in enacting critical changes and additions to existing work and implementing new actions and activities. As agreed, Omar Carrera of Canal Alliance is the most appropriate person to take the lead on the Task Force but he'll need city and county agency staff on the team with the authority to implement the decisions made by the team. Chandra Alexandre of Community Action Marin and Stephanie Haffner of Legal Aid of Marin are likewise committed to the work of the Task Force as initial members.

We trust that we were clear on the conference call and in our letter that in this critical, urgent, and collaborative effort we prioritize not only the well-being of our community's most impacted and least resourced families but also the financial well-being of our local and regional economy. Regarding our economy, we place the highest priority on our local businesses and landowners who provide the jobs and homes for so many of our essential workers and the employees who sustain our region's key industries. We cannot achieve the health and economic recovery we are desperately working for without addressing the areas of greater impact and need, nor can we do so without including support for businesses and landowners. Among our key partners are Chamber of Commerce leaders who recognize the mutually-beneficial partnership these efforts provide for economic recovery and sustainability. As such, the approach is envisioned as a private, public, nonprofit partnership and the response involves an ecosystems approach which recognizes that recovery is only sustainable as a collective effort that prioritizes the most impacted, while also securing support across the business, nonprofit, and residential communities. A core value in the work is the idea that the pain of the impact of the pandemic needs to be more equitably shared across our community.

The following sections provide recommendations for the Policy Task Force in the priority areas of health, housing, and local businesses:

Health:

- Increase investment in mental health support: social services, public health now and post-pandemic planning needed for long-term efforts for dealing with pandemic symptoms and impact (violence, trauma, depression).
- Testing: more and frequent testing and convenient, rapid results (prioritizing most impacted and essential workers).

Housing: Tenants, Housing Stock, Property Owners

- Improve and conserve the existing housing stock.
- Prevent outside buyers from dominating the purchase of distressed properties and properties in low-income communities; include a first right of refusal to buy properties for community development and other nonprofit organizations, and current property residents.
- Make tenant legal representation a permanent service for low-income tenants.
- Prohibit all evictions except where there is an imminent threat to public health and safety for the duration of the pandemic and for at least three months thereafter.
- Rent stabilization: prohibit rent increases and late fees for all units in Marin.
- Suspend rent in areas highly impacted by the pandemic.
- Prohibit evictions based on rent accrued during the pandemic; convert such rent debt to consumer debt
- Create a 0% interest loan program for people to pay rental debt accrued during the pandemic; allow tenants more time to pay rental debt accrued during the pandemic.
- Limit rents charged in Low Income Housing Tax Credit funded properties.
- Property owners: Provide technical assistance, training, and support programs for landowners (securing licenses & permits, financial planning, tax preparation, legal expertise, loans, grants).

Local Businesses

- Testing: more and frequent testing, increased convenience in testing, rapid results testing (especially in high-risk sectors like grocery, restaurants, etc.).
- Protect employees who test positive and support their safe quarantine.
- Explore options for quarantine locations (schools close to their homes, other empty locations).
- Secure regular funding for income support for time off for quarantined employees.
- Explore the possibility of supporting employers to guarantee sick pay and hold jobs for quarantined employees.
- Extend drive-through testing and/or drop-in sites for all essential workers; easy and convenient hours.
- Provide business loans and/or grants (rent, payroll), starting with most impacted.
- Improve access to multilingual resources, including technical assistance, starting with most impacted
- Develop solutions to childcare shortages; resources and subsidies for childcare for business owners, with consideration for gendered impact (women-owned businesses).

Middle and Long Term Planning

The above list of recommended actions and policies focus primarily on the short-term activities needed to achieve a significant decline in infections and a substantial set of actions to help families survive the deep impacts on housing, health, income, and food security. They also focus on short-term support for landowners and businesses, to make sure they too can survive the economic impacts and remain viable businesses through and after the pandemic. However, there are a number of system issues and challenges that have provided the stark reality of how we got here; how susceptible communities have been to housing crises, how unprepared and under-resourced communities have been such that long-standing disparities provided the groundwork for extreme disparities in the context of the pandemic. These systemic issues need to be part of both the analysis to understand the nature, scope, and depth of the challenge we face today and also part of the longer-term planning for recovery, sustainability, and thriving communities among the least resourced neighborhood. To that end, the present effort will also include efforts to align the short-term response model to efforts that address housing, a living wage, access to opportunities, and larger-scale models of community development centered on and prioritizing current residents and their desire to remain in the county, in their neighborhoods.

While these longer-term planning efforts require more research, collaboration, and deliberation, there are several ideas that can provide initial guidance and a point of departure for this work. These are also ideas drawn from existing work and success stories of community development across the country and in neighboring counties. The long-term viability of a thriving community will depend on investments in public housing, community land trusts, and housing cooperatives. The long history of racial segregation, discrimination, and exclusion in housing and economic opportunities has had such a deep and lasting impact that recovery from those practices will require a strong political will, innovative strategies, rapid implementation, and creative, collaborative investment.

We are guided by a thought from the PolicyLink report: *“Local leaders closest to these issues have the solutions, but we need the political will to implement them.”*

Sincerely,



Omar Carrera
CEO Canal Alliance



Stephanie Haffner
ED Legal Aid of Marin



Chandra Alexandre
CEO Community Action Marin

Cc:
California Assemblymember Marc Levine
California State Senator Mike McGuire
U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi
U.S. Senator Kamala Harris
U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein
Regional Director of Northern California, Office of the Governor, Elmy Bermejo
Marin County Public Health Director, Kathleen Koblick
San Rafael Community Development Director, Paul Jensen
San Rafael City Manager, Jim Schutz
Department of Health and Human Services for the County of Marin Director, Benita McClarin



Policy Task Force Collaborative Members

RE: Update on **Marin County Pandemic & Latinos Policy Task Force**

October 26, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The present letter is to provide you with an update on the work of the Policy Task Force. As we mentioned in our last update, we have scheduled weekly meetings for the **Pandemic Policy Task Force Team**, comprised of the three of us, Assistant City Manager Christine Alilovich; Assistant County Administrator Angela Nicholson; Supervisor Rodoni; and staffers Catherine Quffa and Lorenzo Cordova. Other participants have included Leelee Thomas, Community Development Planning Manager at Marin County; and Ethan Guy, Principal Analyst at City of San Rafael, Community Development Department. In addition to our weekly meetings, there have been several other process-driven meetings to move ahead the work. We are pleased to report that there continues to be strong support and leadership among city and county officials. They have taken a very active role in operationalizing the work and decision-making that needs to take place at the city & county agency and executive levels.

As we mentioned before, we are structuring the efforts for immediate outcomes as well as short, middle, and long-term planning for housing & economic stability, as well as a broader capacity building for resiliency. We were able to narrow our list to these five goals for immediate and short-term work:

1. Right of first refusal for nonprofits to purchase properties
2. Property protections against outside investors dominating the market
3. Rent & eviction freezes
4. Rental debt loan programs
5. Mortgage loan program for homeowners and rental property owners

Of these, it was decided, for various reasons, that we would focus on property protections and rent help/eviction freezes as starting points. Our city & county partners have been moving quickly to develop, from their side, a work plan, timeline, and benchmarks for these goals. One immediate next step that was decided is the creation and passing of a **resolution**, to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors and City Council, expressing the urgency of the situation, their commitment to work quickly to address this situation with innovations in existing efforts, and declaring a commitment to specific actions; not just a statement of support, but an action-driven resolution. A draft is being developed and we will share it with you all as soon as we can. We also wanted to mention that on our side, we are working with organizations in the region who are leaders in some of these efforts, including MEDA (Mission Economic Development Agency) regarding small business loans, Mission Asset Fund about a rental debt relief program, and others with adoptable models and leads to resources we may be able to access. These models, together with the political will being developed by our city and county partners, offer very promising opportunities to achieve these important goals.

If you are interested to know more about any of these efforts, please reach out to us. We will continue to provide you with regular updates.

Sincerely,

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