



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

September 6, 2017

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Garrett Toy, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Approve responses to the Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report: *Public Engagement in Marin – A Pathway to Inclusive Governance*

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the responses to the Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report: *Public Engagement in Marin – A Pathway to Inclusive Governance*.

DISCUSSION

The Grand Jury issued the attached report and requested responses to Recommendations R1 through R12. The Town Council is required to respond in writing to Recommendations contained in Marin County Civil Grand Jury reports pursuant to Penal Code § 933.05.

As detailed in the attached responses, the Town has already implemented R3, R4, R5, R6, R9, and R11. R10 has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. R7 and R8 require further analysis. R1, R2, and R12 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or reasonable at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT

The significant staff time needed to prepare responses to the Grand Jury report.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Town of Fairfax Responses to Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report
- B. Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report: *Public Engagement in Marin – A Pathway to Inclusive Governance*

AGENDA ITEM # 19

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

Report Title: Public Engagement in Marin: A Pathway to Inclusive Governance

Report Date: June 15, 2017

Public Release Date: June 26, 2017

Response By: September 26, 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered: 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 11 have been implemented.

See attached explanations.

- Recommendation numbered: 10 has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

See attached explanations.

- Recommendations numbered: 7 and 8 require further analysis.

See attached explanations.

- Recommendations numbered: 1, 2, 12 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or reasonable.

See attached explanations.

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Garrett Toy, Town Manager

ATTEST: _____
Town Clerk

Number of pages attached: 3

TOWN OF FAIRFAX RESPONSES: EXPLANATIONS

R1. Each agency without a formal PE Plan should develop either a PE Plan or PE Guidelines tailored to the needs of their public and publish the results.

As Finding F4 states, smaller municipalities such as the Town of Fairfax do not necessarily have the need, or budget, to develop a formal PE plan. We are fortunate in Fairfax to have a high level of public engagement with many people speaking at Council meetings during open time for items not on the agenda. Public meetings typically draw a large number of residents. In general, the level of public outreach is tailored to the needs of the specific project. The following are the public engagement activities that the Town currently undertakes:

- Meet with members of the public as requested;
- Conduct surveys through the use of an on-line forum (i.e., Peak Democracy);
- For some projects, the Town maintains a separate website with all the information on the project (e.g., fairfaxbridges.com) and a separate electronic mailing list for interested residents;
- The Town Council and/or Planning Commission holds public workshops/study sessions on issues of community interest;
- Use Banners across Sir Francis Drake and/or signs around to announce workshops/meetings;
- Post on Nextdoor to keep the community informed;
- Town Council agendas often include reports as to the status of pending issues as well as regular agenda items for Council and Town Manager reports;
- Residents can sign up to receive electronic agendas of Council and Planning Commission meetings;
- Post meeting notices in three public locations in Town and on the Town website.
- Publish a monthly electronic newsletter with updates to the community (emailed to over 1,000 people) and post on the Town website; and
- The Town's municipal code allows members of the public (a petition with 25 resident signatures) to add items to the Council agenda for discussion.

R2. Each agency should obtain input from the public in the planning and design or update of its plan/guidelines.

While Fairfax makes it a priority to obtain input from the public on all matters, including PE, a plan/guideline is not contemplated at this time. Please see responses to R1.

That being said, Fairfax has implemented suggestions from the public with regard to PE on particular issues. Some examples include: public workshops on the General Plan/Housing Element, numerous public meetings (approximately 12) with the Planning Commission and/or Town Council for a proposed senior affordable housing project including study sessions; study sessions regarding the "Wall property" with the developer to discuss his concept; and study session with the School Street Plaza owner regarding his development ideas.

R3. Agency managers should regularly share their PE Plans and "lessons learned" with their counterparts in other Marin agencies.

The Marin Managers Association meets on a regular basis to share lessons learned.

R4. Each agency should provide early and ample opportunity for PE in the form of proactive engagement in order to ensure that the public is aware of all their PE opportunities.

Please refer to responses to R1 and R2.

R5. Post-engagement, each agency should follow up with the public, informing them of the results of projects and issues.

The Town Newsletter includes a summary of key actions taken by the Council at their meetings. Usually the interested residents attend the meeting and are aware of the Town Council's decision. The Town follows up with people directly affected by a decision who are unable to attend the meeting (e.g., neighborhood residents).

R6. Each agency should create an easy-to-find area on their website dedicated to describing current community issues and explaining how the public can get involved.

The Town's homepage has a "Current Topics" section, a calendar of Town meetings with links to agendas, Town newsletter, and links to various Town websites for more detailed information on projects and activities (e.g., bridge replacement projects, Recreation and Community Service activities).

R7. Each agency should make PE a required responsibility of at least one staff person and publicize that responsibility.

As a smaller agency, the Town uses a team approach to PE. In general, each department is responsible for its PE with oversight by the Town Manager. However, we are willing to further analyze this recommendation.

R8. Each agency should offer regular PE professional development to its staff.

As a smaller agency, this would depend on budget priorities and staff availability.

R9. Each agency should develop meaningful and ongoing partnerships with their local community-based organizations.

The Town meets monthly with the local Chamber of Commerce, and participates in quarterly "chamber mixers." In addition, Town does meet with the Marin Organizing Committee (MOC) on issues as needed. The Town has also created resident committees dedicated to issues such as climate change, the needs of our aging residents, and the use of our open space and parklands. The Council has also formed a Neighborhood Liaison Subcommittee consisting of two Councilmembers tasked with working with neighborhoods on such issues as noise, parking,

traffic calming and sidewalk access. The Town partners with the local non-profit "Sustainable Fairfax" to enhance and implement zero waste goals, to sponsor community events including the Fairfax Festival and Streets for People.

R10. Each agency should include on all written communications the social media platforms they use.

We will evaluate the information to be included in the staff signature block and incorporate as appropriate.

R11. Each agency should communicate and emphasize to the public the importance of participation in PE.

The Council and staff is always encouraging the public to participate in PE. The level of community participation is directly related to the issue.

R12. Each agency should publish an annual report describing the effectiveness of their PE efforts.

We don't believe an annual report would make our PE efforts more effective. More importantly, how would one gauge the effectiveness of PE – by the amount of public comment? If this were a measure, the process to approve the affordable senior housing project was hugely successful since the Town received hundreds of comments on the project.

The Grand Jury relied on 16 self-selected responses to evaluate Fairfax's PE efforts. That's less than 0.2% of all the residents in Town and not necessarily reflective of the Fairfax community as a whole. It anything it demonstrates the challenge all communities face in encouraging public participation. Again, the level of participation is directly related to the issue and the Town tailors its PE efforts toward the specific issue.

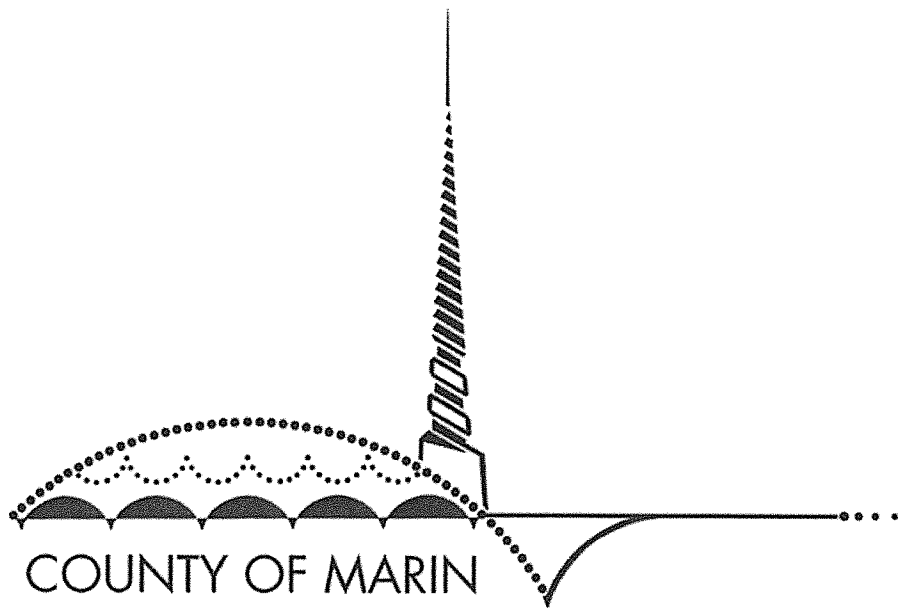
2016–2017 MARIN COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

Public Engagement in Marin

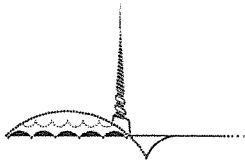
A Pathway to Inclusive Governance

Report Date: June 15, 2017

Public Release Date: June 26, 2017



ATTACHMENT B



Public Engagement in Marin *A Pathway to Inclusive Governance*

SUMMARY

Last year's Grand Jury released a report entitled "2015-2016 Web Transparency Report Card" which rated the information quality of local agencies' websites. This year's jury decided to go a step further and look at how well our cities, towns and the County engage with the public. We first surveyed each of the agencies to learn about their public engagement strategies and their perceived effectiveness. We then surveyed residents of our municipalities and unincorporated areas to get a "snapshot" view of their experience with their local government's engagement. Finally, we looked at the reporting of local issues by local media.

We found that public engagement in Marin takes different forms depending on where you live. In addition, while every agency is making efforts to engage, some have more political will, more resources, and/or a more active public to make that happen. Public engagement may take many forms, but all have the goal of enabling more inclusive governance.

The following report provides an overview of current public engagement throughout Marin and suggests methods of improvement for our 11 municipalities and the County. With this report, the Grand Jury hopes to illuminate a pathway to inclusive governance, inspiring both our local government and the public they serve.

BACKGROUND

*"Government should be participatory. Public engagement enhances the government's effectiveness and improves the quality of its decisions."*¹

– Barack Obama

Many terms describe public involvement in government decision making: community or civic engagement, community participation, and public participation. In this Report, we define public engagement (PE) as: *A broad range of methods through which government agencies provide the public with more and better information about, and meaningful opportunities to influence, government decisions.* Public engagement is not new.² However, effective public engagement calls upon agencies to go beyond minimum statutory requirements, such as the Ralph M. Brown Act³

¹ Obama, Barack. "Transparency and Open Government." *Federal Register*. 21 Jan. 2009

² Nalbanian, John. "Facilitating Community, Enabling Democracy: New Roles for Local Government Managers." *Public Administration Review*. November/December, 1999..

³ "Gov-54950.5 Ralph M. Brown Act." *California Legislative Information*.

for public meetings and the California Public Records Act⁴ for keeping and providing public records.

PE is important for local government agencies as well as the public they serve. Today, agencies throughout California are applying a variety of PE strategies and practices to address issues ranging from land use and budgeting to housing and public safety. They are discovering that successful engagement of residents in decision making can bring several benefits.⁵

- Improved agency decision-making and actions, with better impacts and outcomes
- More community buy-in and support for agency decisions, with less contentiousness
- Faster project implementation with less time and expense in revisiting or reversing decisions
- Better identification of the public's values, ideas and recommendations
- More informed residents about issues and local agencies
- More civil discussions and decision making
- More trust in each other and local government
- Higher rates of community participation and leadership development

Effective PE may now be more important than ever. "Disparities in education, health, economic opportunity, and access to affordable housing and justice continue to increase, and the resources available to confront those challenges have not kept pace with expanding needs."⁶ Marin's municipalities and the County of Marin face increasingly significant issues needing public support for resolution, such as the lack of affordable housing and unfunded post-retirement liabilities. Building partner-like relationships between these agencies and their communities through PE may provide the support our agencies need. Marinites want to be engaged, as noted in the County's *5 Year Business Plan for 2015-2020*.⁷ However, a December 2016 Marin Independent Journal Editorial, favorably commenting on the County's goals for 2017, concluded by stating:

*The list of goals or New Year's resolutions deserved more public attention and involvement before they were approved as political marching orders, but maybe fixing that flaw will make the list for 2018.*⁸

Local government efforts at public engagement often occur as one-time activities focused on one immediate and controversial issue. However, local governments that "embed" a capacity to regularly consider, design, use and improve their PE practices may be better able to successfully assess the need for PE in particular instances and shape the best responses, since no one set of PE strategies works for everyone.⁹ Those local governments often have written PE plans guiding their public engagement efforts. In Marin, Mill Valley, Novato, San Rafael, and the County have formal PE plans. (See Appendix A for definition of "PE Plan.")

⁴ "Gov-6251 California Public Records Act." *California Legislative Information*.

⁵ "What is Public Engagement & Why Should I do it?" *Institute for Local Government*. 2016.

⁶ Barnes, Melody & Schmitz, Paul. "Community Engagement Matters (Now More Than Ever)." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Spring 2016.

⁷ "County of Marin 5 Year Business Plan, 2015-2020." *County of Marin*. October 2015.

⁸ "County lists legislative goals for 2017." *Marin Independent Journal*. 31 Dec. 2016.

⁹ "Three Orientations of Local Government to Public Engagement: Passive-Active-Sustaining." *Institute for Local Government*. 2016. ; "Embedding Public Engagement in Local Government." *Institute for Local Government*. Accessed 2017.

Since public engagement is important especially now, we undertook this study to see how Marin's municipalities and the County view their own public engagement, what the public's view is, how the news media perceives PE in Marin, and to make suggestions for improving PE in our municipalities and the County.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury followed the methodology outlined below.

Literature Review. We analyzed literature from respected sources in California, nationwide and internationally to identify best practices in public engagement. These sources include the following:

- Institute for Local Government, an affiliate of the League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties and the California Special Districts Association
- The Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership at Pepperdine University, a co-author of reports with the Institute for Local Government
- Public Agenda, a New York based nonpartisan nonprofit organization and co-author of reports with the Institute for Local Government and The Davenport Institute
- National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation, a Pennsylvania based organization
- International Association for Public Participation, a Colorado based international association that seeks to improve public engagement

Public Engagement Plan Review. We reviewed public engagement plans, ordinances and resolutions in Marin and other California cities and counties.

Grand Jury Report Review. We reviewed *The Win Cup/Tam Ridge Residences: How Did It Come To Pass?*¹⁰ and the response.

Public Engagement Information Request to Marin Agencies. We prepared a Public Engagement Information Request and distributed it to Marin's 11 municipalities and the County of Marin to gather their views on public engagement opportunities. (See Appendix A: Public Engagement Information Request.) The Information Request included questions regarding the best practice strategies for implementing public engagement principles formulated by the sources listed above.¹¹ SF Bay Area cities that have used such strategies and principles in public engagement plans include Oakland and Menlo Park.¹²

Public Engagement Survey to Marin Residents. We also prepared a survey for Marin residents to gather the public's views on engagement in their municipalities and the County. (See Appendix B: Survey of Residents of Unincorporated Marin County and Appendix C: Survey of Residents of Marin Cities & Incorporated Towns.) The public survey adapts concepts from a California joint report issued by the Institute for Local Government, The Davenport Institute for Public

¹⁰ "Win Cup/Tam Ridge Residences: How Did It Come To Pass?" *Marin County Civil Grand Jury*. 24 June 2015.

¹¹ "Principles of Local Government Public Engagement." *Institute for Local Government*. 2015. ; "Core Principles for Public Engagement." *National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation*. 1 May 2009. ; "Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation." *International Association for Public Participation*. 2008.

¹² "Oakland City Council Resolution No. 84385 Resolution Establishing The City of Oakland's Budget Process Transparency and Public Participation Policy." *City of Oakland*. 21 May 2013.; "City of Menlo Park. *Community Engagement Plan*." *City of Menlo Park*. 2011-12.

Engagement and Civic Leadership, and Public Agenda.¹³ The Grand Jury circulated this survey through the cooperation of news and social media and some agencies.

News Media Review. We reviewed *Marin Independent Journal* articles on public engagement in Marin. The Independent Journal has served Marin readers for more than 150 years, often shining the light on local government and public engagement.¹⁴

Attendance at Public Meetings. Finally, the Grand Jury attended public meetings of Marin municipalities and the County.

¹³ Beyond Business as Usual: Leaders of California's Civic Organizations Seek New Ways to Engage the Public in Local Governance. *Public Agenda*. 2013.

¹⁴ "Sunshine week' celebrates the public's right to know." *Marin Independent Journal*. 15 March 2017.

DISCUSSION

Using the concepts of public engagement (PE), the Grand Jury took a snapshot of 12 government agencies and the public to get an idea of not only how these agencies view their own PE efforts, but also how the public perceives these efforts. We started by surveying Marin's 11 municipalities and the County ("the agencies") in the form of an online Information Request containing questions pertaining to PE attitudes, practices and approaches. Each agency was given 21 days to respond during which time we were available to answer questions from respondents.

To assess how the people of Marin feel about public engagement, we developed and disseminated two online Public Engagement Surveys designed to capture information from residents of both cities and towns and the unincorporated areas of Marin. These surveys were announced through the *Marin Independent Journal*, *The Ark Newspaper*, *Marin Post*, *Point Reyes Light*, and the private social networking service for neighborhoods, *Nextdoor*. As was the case with the agencies, the surveys were open for 21 days and we were available to answer questions from respondents during that time. The questions in both surveys were identical and provided opportunities for both multiple-choice and narrative responses. It is important to remember that the people who responded to the public survey were self-selected. However, they were willing to share their thoughts to give us a window into what some of our public is thinking. Four hundred fifty-one (451) public responses were received and reviewed, after culling duplicates.

Overview: Agency Public Engagement Information Request Responses

Viewed in aggregate, Marin agencies' responses to our request (see Appendix D: Summary Agency Views of Public Engagement) showed:

- **Benefits.** Agencies mostly agreed on these PE benefits: improved decision making; more community buy-in; better identification of the public's values, ideas and recommendations; more informed residents; more civil discussions; more trust; faster project implementation; and higher rates of participation.
- **A Formal PE Plan.** Four of the 12 agencies reported having a plan.
- **Inclusive Planning Use.** Agencies all agreed on the use of PE for these areas: parks & recreation, land use & planning, transportation & infrastructure, housing, and budgeting.
- **Transparency Strategies.** Agencies all used: newsletters by email, newsletters on website, community news on website, and draft budgets online.
- **Improving Authentic Intent.** Agencies mostly: summarized complexity, used clear and simple language, and meaningful and timely information.
- **The PE Culture.** All agencies rated their culture as excellent or good in these areas: PE improves decision-making, views the public as partners, gives public full consideration, and proactively contacts and engages with community.

- **Breadth of Participation.** All agencies “regularly” or “sometimes”: build and nurture relationships, distribute information regularly, provide timely information, and welcome community participation.
- **Informed Participation.** All agencies “regularly” or “sometimes”: proactively post issues on their website and use other communication platforms.
- **Accessible Participation.** All agencies “regularly” or “sometimes”: have meetings that are broadly accessible in terms of location/time/language and deliver presentations in alternative living locations for the elderly.

Not surprisingly, all of the agencies are aware of the importance of public engagement, agree on its many benefits, and view themselves as having a good PE culture.

Opinions varied as to what constitutes effective PE. A recurring theme in response to the Information Request was “one size does not fit all.” As a result, some agencies – especially the smaller ones – do not feel the need for a formal PE Plan. Instead, they are comfortable taking their cues from the communities they serve, reacting to issues as they come up and engaging mostly through their websites, newsletters, and public meetings. Others may have budgeting and other resource concerns to contend with before they can consider developing a plan. With the exception of the City of Sausalito, those with populations under 10,000 do not intend to develop any formal PE Plan at this time.

However, the Grand Jury suggests that agencies do not need to start their public engagement efforts by crafting a formal PE Plan. Instead, an agency can gather their existing engagement strategies in a simple document (which we refer to as *PE Guidelines*), which can evolve over time with community input. The process of creating the Guidelines does not need to be expensive nor take a lot of resources. These Guidelines can also avoid the need to reinvent the wheel each time a public engagement issue arises, and provide flexibility in the event of employee retirement or turnover.¹⁵ Elements of such Guidelines can be found in checklists and tables contained in San Luis Obispo’s Public Engagement and Noticing Manual¹⁶ and Seattle Office for Civil Rights’ Inclusive Outreach And Public Engagement Guide.¹⁷

Larger municipalities such as Novato and San Rafael, who have completed formal PE plans, encompass much larger geographic areas with greater, more diverse populations. With a larger public to serve and contend with, it makes sense for these municipalities to develop and make use of a formal PE Plan to achieve effective, meaningful, and consistent communication.

Appendix E (“Platforms Used to Engage The Public”) reflects some of the tools and platforms Marin’s cities/towns and the County are using to disseminate information to the public. While each agency makes use of standard, expected methods of communication, such as public meetings and notices, website and email, most have also embraced what have become popular and relatively

¹⁵ Medford, Marlena. “[Silos Are Good for Grain—Not Public Engagement.](#)” *Peak Democracy*. 14 Dec. 2016.

¹⁶ “[Public Engagement And Noticing Manual.](#)” *City of San Luis Obispo*. Nov. 2015.

¹⁷ “[Inclusive Outreach And Public Engagement Guide.](#)” *Seattle Office for Civil Rights*. April 2009 (Rev. 01/11/12).

essential social media platforms like Twitter and texting. This represents an expansion from the minimum requirements of The Brown Act, which guarantees the public’s right to attend and participate in meetings of local legislative bodies. Moving beyond these requirements is an essential strategy of effective, modern day PE.

Overview: Comparing Public Engagement in Marin with the San Francisco Bay Area

In 2013, Public Agenda published *Testing the Waters*¹⁸ and *Beyond Business As Usual*.¹⁹ These reports contained the results from surveys of 900 local officials and 500 leaders of civic and community-based organizations throughout California, exploring “the attitudes of California’s local officials toward public participation in local governance.” The reports concluded that, “These officials believe that the current models for including the public in local decision making fail to meet the needs of both residents and local officials.”²⁰

Although our sample size was significantly smaller (12 Marin vs. 206 Bay Area officials) than the *Testing the Waters* survey, we found similarities:

<i>Testing the Waters</i> Question	<i>Testing the Waters</i> 206 Bay Area Respondents	Grand Jury Survey 12 Marin Agencies
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level of public participation in local government decision making in your community?	72% at least “somewhat satisfied”	75% at least “somewhat satisfied”
Thinking about significant public decisions that you’ve been involved with, which best describes how this process typically works?	4% input from experts 60% input also from stakeholders & interest groups 36% input from broad cross section	8% input from experts 42% input also from stakeholders & interest groups 50% input from broad cross section
In the past year, how often have you seen a public decision made with considerable input from a broad cross section of the community?	100% at least once	75% at least once

¹⁸ Hagelskamp, Carolin and Immerwahr, John and Hess, Jeremy. “Testing the Waters: California’s Local Officials Experiment with New Ways to Engage the Public.” *Public Agenda*. 2013.

¹⁹ Hagelskamp, Carolin and Immerwahr, John and Hess, Jeremy. “Beyond Business As Usual: Leaders of California’s Civic Organizations Seek New Ways to Engage the Public in Local Government.” *Public Agenda*. 2013.

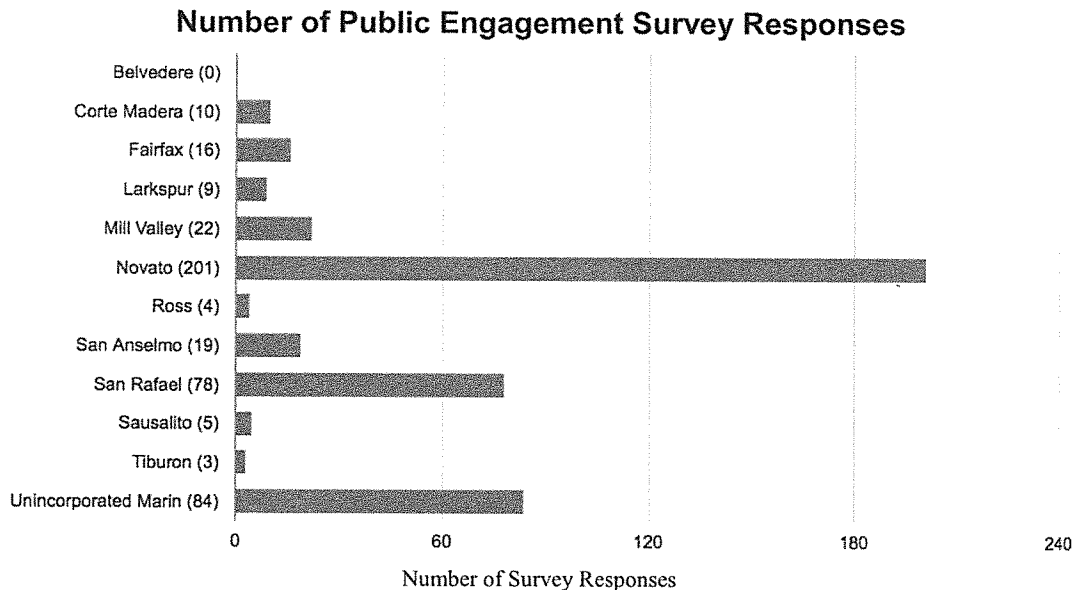
²⁰ Hagelskamp, Carolin and Immerwahr, John and Hess, Jeremy. “Testing the Waters: California’s Local Officials Experiment with New Ways to Engage the Public.” *Public Agenda*. 2013.

Likewise, our sample of 451 Marin residents vs. 125 Bay Area civic leaders (from *Beyond Business As Usual*) also showed similarities:

<i>Beyond Business as Usual</i> Question	<i>Beyond Business as Usual</i> 125 Bay Area Respondents	Grand Jury Survey 451 Marin Residents
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the efforts made by most local public officials to include the public in government decision making?	7% Very satisfied 49% Somewhat satisfied 22% Somewhat dissatisfied 15% Very dissatisfied	20% Satisfied 31% Somewhat satisfied 18% Somewhat dissatisfied 24% Dissatisfied
One way for local officials to engage with the public is through public hearings and comments at council, board or commission meetings. In the past 12 months, how many times have you personally attended such a meeting?	21% Never 32% 1-2 46% 3 or more	33% Never 36% 1-2 31% 3 or more
As far as you are aware, do your local public officials REGULARLY use the following for communication and outreach to the public?	72% Email 32% Social Media 73% Website	59% Email 43% Social Media 79% Website

Overview: Resident Responses to Public Engagement Survey

The total number of responses by residents of our cities, towns, and unincorporated areas of Marin was 451, as shown below:



Details: Individual City, Town, and County Snapshots

Since each agency has its own philosophy of what effective PE is, and how to achieve it, the following discussion highlights each town or city and the County on its own merits. Each municipality's snapshot contains the following information:

- **Background.** Demographic overview of the municipality using *Bay Area Census*²¹ data.
- **View from the City (or Town or County).** Excerpts from the agency informational requests (see Appendix A).
- **Views from the Residents.** Highlights from the public surveys (see Appendices B and C), representative comments from residents, and a “by-the-numbers” synopsis:
 - On average how many public hearings, meetings and/or workshops do you attend each year? (“**Meeting Attendance**”)
 - Are you interested in becoming more engaged in the decision making process? (“**Engagement Interest**”)
 - How satisfied are you with the efforts to include the public in government decision making? (“**PE Satisfaction**”)
 - Please rate how the agency is doing in the following areas of public engagement (“**Detailed PE Issues**”)
 - Agency is making more of an effort to engage a wide variety of people in government decision making (“**Making an effort**”)
 - Agency engages the public in ways that are broadly accessible in terms of location, facilities, time, and language (“**Broadly Accessible**”)
 - Residents have ample opportunity to participate in agency’s government decisions (“**Ample Opportunity**”)
 - Agency provides the public with the information it needs, and with enough lead time, to effectively engage in the decision making process (“**Effectiveness**”)
 - Agency gives full consideration to public input before making government decisions (“**Full Consideration**”)
 - Agency regularly informs residents of follow-up, progress, outcomes, and impacts concerning decisions made based on public involvement (“**Regularly Informs**”)
 - Agency builds relationships with community-based groups and interested residents that are broadly reflective of the public it serves (“**Relationship Building**”)
 - Agency regularly uses clear and simple language in communications (“**Clear & Simple**”)
 - Which tools are used to engage and communicate with the public? (“**PE Tool Awareness**”)
- **View from the Media.** Illustrative PE issues covered by the press in recent years. Studies show a positive relationship between newspaper readership and civic engagement.²² Most of the featured stories are from *The Marin Independent Journal* (IJ), Marin’s major news source. Some of the stories recapped in this section are success stories. Some are not. The Grand Jury suggests that all are instructive for the benefits of effective public engagement.
- **Summary.** A brief comparison of views expressed by the agency, residents, and media.

²¹ “*Bay Area Census.*” *Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments.*

²² Shaker, Lee. “*Dead Newspapers and Citizens’ Civic Engagement.*” *Political Communication Journal.* Volume 31, 2014-Issue 1, 30 Jan. 2014.

Snapshot Belvedere

Belvedere has the smallest population of all Marin cities and towns at just 2,068 residents with a median family income of \$181,800. It has the highest percentage of residents over 65 years at 31.6%, and the smallest percentage of children under 5 years at just 4.6%. However, Belvedere is in the average range of families with children under 18 at 24.2%.

View from the City

Belvedere does not have, and does not plan on adopting, a formal PE Plan. Nor is PE a part of any one job description within the agency. When asked why they had no plans to adopt a PE Plan, Belvedere responded, “As a small city, PE processes can often be accomplished more easily and informally compared to larger cities. At this time, we feel our current PE processes garner a sufficient amount of public engagement such that formalizing a plan is not necessary at this time.”

As we heard from other small-scale communities in Marin, size matters when it comes to spending agency resources on developing a full-scale PE Plan and hiring PE-specific personnel. In addition, because of the very nature of their close-knit communities, municipalities like Belvedere feel that active public engagement tends to happen organically. Indeed a visit to Belvedere’s website confirms that the deer issue and its follow-on study, is featured prominently on a new webpage where all reports, information, public correspondence, and a video-recorded community forum are catalogued regarding this issue.²³

Views From the Residents

There were no respondents to our survey to provide information or insight regarding resident views of PE efforts in Belvedere.

View from the Media

* A long-running issue in Belvedere concerns what some residents say is an out of control deer population. With the community divided over what, if anything, to do about it, they continue grappling with solutions as the City Council works to hear public input. In August 2016 the IJ reported that, “...the council agreed the deer issue needs to be addressed, and it voted unanimously to confront community concerns by calling for a forum in which they will invite wildlife experts to participate in a panel.” That this is an issue that merits debate “was evident by the turnout,” said the IJ.²⁴

Summary

- Since Belvedere is a very small community, the city reports no need for a formal PE Plan.
- Based on media reports, Belvedere residents are engaged – primarily in an on-going, issue-by-issue basis.

²³ “Current Issues before the City Council.” *City of Belvedere*.

²⁴ Rodriguez, Adrian. “Belvedere deer issue to be subject of forum.” *Marin Independent Journal*. 9 Aug. 2016.

Snapshot Corte Madera

Corte Madera’s population is 9,253 with a median family income of \$141,140. Although only 16% of the residents are over 65, certainly not the highest percentage in Marin, Corte Madera has been recognized by the World Health Organization as a member of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities self-identifying as “Age-Friendly Corte Madera.”²⁵ Corte Madera and its neighboring city, Larkspur, often called “the Twin Cities,” share a police department with San Anselmo (the Central Marin Police Authority) and is currently in discussion with Larkspur regarding merging fire departments.

View from the Town

Corte Madera does not have and has no plans to adopt a formal PE Plan. According to the town, “Public engagement is an expectation as a Town. We follow best practices for engaging the public and disseminating information. We also hire employees that understand the importance of this expectation.”

Extending outreach through webcasting, Facebook, Nextdoor, texting and mobile apps, Corte Madera has also created an effective transparency portal on their website.²⁶

The town also regularly assesses their PE efforts for effectiveness, asking participants for feedback and advice pertaining to their PE experience.

Views From the Residents

Ten Corte Madera residents responded to our survey. By the numbers:

Meeting Attendance	70% have attended at least one meeting annually
Engagement Interest	70% want to be engaged more
PE Satisfaction	60% are at least “somewhat satisfied” by efforts
Detailed PE Issues	Increased effort, advance information, and informs are ranked worst
PE Tool Awareness	Website and social media are most familiar

²⁵ “Our Mission Statement.” *Age-Friendly Corte Madera*. Accessed 28 Apr. 2017.

²⁶ “Transparency Portal.” *The Town of Corte Madera*.

The quotes below are some of the responses to our invitation for general comment. However, it must be noted that given the small number of responses, these views are not necessarily representative of the greater public's views:

Town has an outstanding website, a weekly online newsletter, email notices of hearings and uses Nextdoor to distribute information.

We wonder where the tax \$\$ goes, as many updates and repairs are shoddily done; especially with the heavy weather and damage to many roadside areas.

Corte Madera is generally open with its communication. Some people are just not interested in participating.

View from the Media

* The road to completing Corte Madera's Tam Ridge apartment complex has been a rocky one. A March 2017 IJ editorial²⁷ citing progress on the project stated, "There have been some important lessons learned along the way, including that it is better to make sure that the public is informed about and encouraged to engage in the decision making process than having to deal with the public fall-out." Because of its controversial development history, this same article reported that, "The building has also reinvigorated public interest in local planning decisions, as residents have gotten a look at what can happen when they aren't paying attention."

* In another development debate, plans to rebuild a major Corte Madera hotel has run up against public opposition over the paving of a pond that currently sits on the intended expansion site. After vetting the plan in what the IJ in April 2017 called "marathon meetings," most recently one with a "heated, four-hour standoff," the issue continues to be debated.²⁸

Summary

- The town reports good PE efforts and has no plans to create a formal PE Plan.
- Residents who responded to our survey are generally positive, although "advance information" and "informs" were rated negatively. This view is perhaps part of the difficulties reported in the media.
- The Marin IJ reported on two on-going controversies in Corte Madera highlighting the recognition that early and on-going involvement in community issues is crucial.

²⁷ "Marin IJ: Progress on Corte Madera apartment complex welcome." *Marin Independent Journal* 26 Feb. 2017

²⁸ Rodriguez, Adrian. "Corte Madera hotel plan plods through pond debate." *Marin Independent Journal*. 4 Apr. 2017

Snapshot Fairfax

The town of Fairfax has a population of 7,441. Nearly 27% of the residents are families with kids under 18, and 4.5% have kids under five. The Town of Fairfax website describes Fairfax as “...an environmentally conscious community situated in the heart of central Marin County and is considered the most progressive of Marin’s 11 incorporated cities.” The site further states, “The Town has ordinances preventing chain stores; take-out styrofoam food packaging and plastic bags and is in the process of updating its General Plan with a goal of retaining its small town character.”²⁹

View from the Town

Fairfax does not have a formal PE Plan, nor does it intend to create one. While Fairfax “actively engages the community for input on major land use, projects, and/or policy issues,” the town finds that “different approaches are needed for different issues/projects.” As an example of rigorous, ongoing public discourse requiring time and resources, Fairfax cited, “One land use issue [that] has been in discussion for four years.”

After gathering community input via a community workshop and online forums, the town recently changed direction regarding plans for their Town Center. In addition, public online forum discussions surrounding the issue of medical marijuana cultivation led to a more informed decision.

Views from the Residents

Sixteen residents responded to our survey. By the numbers:

Meeting Attendance	68.8% have attended at least one meeting annually
Engagement Interest	68.8% want to be engaged more
PE Satisfaction	43.8% are at least “somewhat satisfied” by efforts
Detailed PE Issues	Advance information, full consideration, and informs are ranked worst
PE Tool Awareness	Website and surveys are most familiar

²⁹ “About Fairfax, California.” *Town of Fairfax*.

Below are some responses to our invitation to make general comments:

I wish that the Town would post on Facebook or have a blog as part of their website to post updates about ongoing issues.

The more controversial items on the meeting agenda are scheduled at the end of the town meetings, so you may have to stay 4 hours to be heard. I've seen instances of the town council making decisions before the public is heard...

The Town of Fairfax government operates in secrecy and with complete disregard for the interests of its citizens. There is an imperial and dismissive air to Town officials. They do not care at all what residents think and completely disregard views contrary to their own.

View from the Media

* The Fairfax Town Council has reacted to the undoing of a 2014 rezoning decision by proposing a new district exclusively for senior housing in hopes of building community support for the affordable senior housing project known as Victory Village. A March 2016 IJ article reported that, "Opponents to the rezoning gathered more than 1,000 signatures on a petition forcing the council to backtrack and undo the zoning change."

Opposition for this latest zoning proposal has been vocal, but support for Victory Village is also being voiced. According to the IJ, "The project has the full support of the Marin Organizing Committee, a group of 16 civic organizations, including churches and synagogues, which has championed the cause of addressing Marin's affordable housing shortage."³⁰

* In a related issue, a former Fairfax council member posted a letter on behalf of a concerned citizen's group to *The Marin Post*. The letter, addressed to the Town's mayor and council, appeared under the headline "Fairfax residents ask Town to preserve public engagement and transparency in planning decisions."³¹

Summary

- Fairfax reports having no PE Plan with no intent to develop one. The town believes different approaches to engage the public are needed for different kinds of issues.
- The resident response to our survey indicates a wish for increased efforts in PE by the town. Less than half the respondents to our survey were somewhat satisfied with the town's efforts and the majority expressed the desire to become more involved.
- This view was also expressed by residents in a letter addressed to the Town and subsequently posted to *The Marin Post*.

³⁰ Halstead, Richard. "Fairfax tries new zoning tack on senior housing complex." *Marin Independent Journal*. 6 Mar. 2017.

³¹ "Fairfax residents ask Town to preserve public engagement and transparency in planning decisions." *The Marin Post*. 1 Feb. 2017.

Snapshot Larkspur

Larkspur’s population is 11,926, making it the fifth largest municipality in Marin. The median family income is \$115,360. Along with Belvedere and Sausalito, more than 21% of its residents are over 65, which gives these three cities the highest percentage of older adults in all Marin. Larkspur and Corte Madera are often referred to as the “Twin Cities,” in part because of their close proximity to one another. The Twin Cities share a local community newspaper (*Twin Cities Times*), are currently in negotiation regarding a merger of fire departments, and have consolidated police departments with San Anselmo forming the tri-city “Central Marin Police Authority.”

View from the City

Larkspur does not have a formal PE Plan. Engagement opportunities are made available in multiple ways beyond the public meeting, including use of tools such as Facebook, Twitter and texting. Larkspur states that they view their public as partners, and give full consideration to public input before making decisions. PE is an assigned duty of one or more staff members and the City of Larkspur “makes every effort to engage the public in its processes.”

Views from the Residents

There were nine responses from Larkspur residents to our survey. By the numbers:

Meeting Attendance	88.9% have attended at least one meeting annually
Engagement Interest	66.7% want to be engaged more
PE Satisfaction	33.3% are at least “somewhat satisfied” by efforts
Detailed PE Issues	Broad accessibility, advance information, and full consideration are ranked worst
PE Tool Awareness	Website and email are most familiar

The quotes below are some of the responses to our invitation for general comments. It must be noted, however, that given the small number of responses, these views are not necessarily representative of the public’s views:

I haven't used the Larkspur Web Site. I don't think I get information that I need to know [about] what is going on in the City Hall Meetings or general information about [what] is going on about town. Only if I go to the City and ask a particular questions is when I find out what is going on about that one thing.

Staff (city manager) wants to control information presented at meetings. Often will not release contribution to board meetings before the date.

A recently started email newsletter from the City Manager is excellent.

View from the Media

* In February 2016, the Marin IJ reported that two 25-foot poles gifted to the City of Larkspur were installed on Magnolia Avenue at Ward Street to allow nonprofits, schools and public agencies to promote events by hanging a banner across the avenue. However, some business owners and residents weren't happy about the poles or what was perceived as a lack of public process preceding their installation. Concerned that the poles were too big and not in keeping with Larkspur's historical downtown, one business owner said he felt "blind-sided" and that, "It would have been nice to give some design comment. I think that if they had done a structure that had at least appeared somewhat more historic, it could have been fine." City officials said that the poles "were considered a utility project, which didn't require the same treatment as a remodel or upkeep of architecture."³² Although the poles were discussed in two public meetings, it seems residents were still caught off guard. In a subsequent City Council meeting, city officials said they "failed the public process" and called for the poles to be brought down immediately.³³

* In February of 2017, an IJ editorial noted that public protests prompted Larkspur to reverse its decision (which was already being implemented) to reduce traffic lanes on a heavily-traveled, short stretch of Magnolia Avenue at a cost of thousands of dollars to taxpayers. While the City approved the lane change, it did not "get much public attention until locals noticed the [rerouting] lines painted on the road." The Editorial noted this "deserved more effective front-end attention" and "That attention might have saved taxpayers \$50,000, a cost that should serve as a reminder for future projects."³⁴

* Since 2012, the City has been working on the design and funding for a new library and community center. An anonymous donor offered \$4M to the Larkspur Library Foundation in exchange for their pledge to match the donation. According to the City, it became clear that the community and donor's visions differed, and the donor's pledge was withdrawn. "Our hope has been to create a proposal that could be supported by the community from both an aesthetic and functional point of view, and also attract needed funding resources. We acknowledge that the process has not been without controversy, but we are committed to its success, regardless of what outcome it may produce. Public engagement can be a slow, arduous and costly process, but the value added by this investment will be reflected in the quality of the results. Consensus begins with discussion and compromise, and we are committed to continue the conversation over the coming months."³⁵

Summary

- Larkspur has no formal PE Plan and no intent to develop one, although the agency does report utilizing multiple tools to engage the public.
- With only nine responses from the public, the Grand Jury makes no inferences.
- Larkspur has more than once in the recent past found it necessary to reverse decisions due to public outcry.

³² Rodriguez, Adrian. "Commotion rises over Larkspur promotional banner poles." *Marin Independent Journal*. 26 Feb. 2016.

³³ Rodriguez, Adrian. "Larkspur council considers relocating controversial banner poles." *The Mercury News*. 2 Mar. 2016

³⁴ "Larkspur rescinds Magnolia lane change." *Marin Independent Journal*. 1 Feb. 2017.

³⁵ "Larkspur is committed to work on new library." *Marin Independent Journal*. 11 Apr. 2017

Snapshot Mill Valley

According to 2010 census data, Mill Valley has a population of 13,903. This makes Mill Valley the third largest city in Marin. The median family income is \$167,000. Of the 6,084 households, 30% have children under 18. Similar to San Rafael, Mill Valley shares its zip code with a number of unincorporated areas including Strawberry, Tam Valley, Almonte, Homestead Valley and Alto.

View from the City

Mill Valley has a formal PE Plan. Adopted in June of 2014, their *Strategic Communications Plan* is "...designed to identify goals and strategies to effectively communicate with community members, drive the development of internal communications policies, and improve the overall effectiveness of the City in meeting the needs of the community."³⁶

As identified in the *Communications Plan*, a "Communications Group"— comprised of a Community Engagement Supervisor (newly established position as a result of the Plan), Communications Specialist (part-time contract service provider), and the Assistant to the City Manager – was established to implement communication goals. Mill Valley now has an active Community Engagement Supervisor who reports to the Assistant to the City Manager. In addition, Mill Valley has a convenient transparency portal on its recently revised website.³⁷

With two-way communication defined as a priority, Mill Valley has been busy with many significant PE processes over the past 24 months, including: community workshops, regular email newsletter updates, liaisons with the business community, outdoor tabling and tent events, and door-to-door interactions. As a result of increased involvement of the public, more decisions are based on community support and, in one instance, such efforts "galvanized a neighborhood."

Views from the Residents

We received responses from 22 residents of Mill Valley. By the numbers:

Meeting Attendance	86.4% have attended at least one meeting annually
Engagement Interest	59.1% want to be engaged more
PE Satisfaction	72.7% are at least "somewhat satisfied" by efforts
Detailed PE Issues	Full consideration and builds relationships are ranked worst
PE Tool Awareness	Website, email, and direct mail are most familiar

Of the 22 respondents who completed our survey, not all responded to our invitation for general comments. However, some of those responses are below:

MV City manager does a yeoman's job of sending out MV Connect and his Newsletter on a regular basis, putting a positive spin on most subjects, even the less savory subjects.

I think that the decision making process about who should serve on committees should be more transparent.

More advanced notice is needed about meaty agenda items. Agendas come out Thursday for Monday meetings. Not enough time to inform and engage citizens and businesses. Would like an

³⁶ "Strategic Communications Plan." *City of Mill Valley*. June 2014.

³⁷ "Transparency." *City of Mill Valley*. Accessed 28 Apr. 2017.

annual and six month published calendar with topics. Mill Valley communication and decision making too centralized in City Manager.

Council member hosts table at Litton [sic] Square monthly ---Rotates---for citizen input etc. Great effort by them.

I see council members in town and they are very approachable and take time to stop and answer questions or make suggestions or provide contact information.

90% of what they do is for show and to avoid legal challenges, not because they actually want to hear any dissenting opinions.

View from the Media

* Settlement of a lawsuit alleging failure to preserve and protect the city’s recreational and emergency evacuation routes was contingent upon approval at a March 20, 2017 Mill Valley City Council meeting. The lawsuit was filed against Mill Valley’s city manager in October 2016 by a former city planning commissioner and longtime trail advocate. The IJ reported that, “News of the lawsuit ignited citizens, who formed a committee to put pressure on city officials to correct what they say has been years of neglect.” As a result, “The City Council in January approved a nine-point action plan to address concerns about the protection and preservation of the paths. The city has since resolved more than 10 complaints of encroachments through a crackdown in enforcement.” Mill Valley’s mayor was quoted as saying, “This action is an example of the Mill Valley City Council listening to the community and taking deliberate and thoughtful action to directly resolve concerns.”³⁸

* Mill Valley has taken action in responding to acts of hate and anti-Semitism in their community by adopting a resolution, “reaffirming its commitment to respect, tolerance and compassion – with a plan to appoint a ‘task force’ committee to reinforce the effort,” stated the Marin IJ in an April 18, 2017 article. The “resolution package” includes “an action plan to audit existing community programs in an effort to ensure that the city is offering services, policies and programs with the same intent and commitment to tolerance and respect.” Further, “Community members were excited that the council was discussing these issues of intolerance.” The task force will likely include those who live and work in Mill Valley.³⁹

Summary

- Mill Valley has a robust PE Plan and website and has made two-way communication a priority.
- The City has a highly-engaged public that mostly views council members favorably, but thinks issues could be communicated earlier and better.
- The IJ reports quick responses to high-profile citizen concerns.

³⁸ Rodriguez, Adrian. “[Mill Valley settles steps, lanes and paths lawsuit.](#)” *Marin Independent Journal*. 18 Mar. 2017.

³⁹ Rodriguez, Adrian. “[Mill Valley council promotes respect and tolerance to quell hate episodes.](#)” *Marin Independent Journal*. 18 Apr. 2017.

Snapshot Novato

Novato is Marin's second largest city with a population of 51,904. The median age of its residents is 43 years with 15.7% over 65. Novato has the second largest concentration of Hispanic or Latino residents at 21.3%, behind San Rafael with 30%. The median family income is \$97,000/year.⁴⁰ Nearly half of the city's employees live within Novato, an important issue for many Marin cities and towns where affordability is often a challenge.

View from the City

As the second most populous municipality in Marin, Novato has a PE Plan (dated 2015-2016) which has not been formally adopted. They also employ a Public Communications Coordinator who is specifically tasked with public participation and engagement. For Novato, "effective communication means improving public access to timely, accurate, and helpful information about the City and its services; providing a variety of easy, accessible, and meaningful ways to engage with the City; and promoting transparency in the City's decision-making process and outcomes of key citywide issues affecting the daily lives of our Novato community."⁴¹

The City has a history of being engaged and active in civic discussion. However, they have recently broadened their reach by recognizing and utilizing the changing technology landscape to inform and engage the public. Facebook, Twitter, texting, webcasting, e-newsletters, and Nextdoor are among the newer platforms Novato is using to expand their outreach.

Views from the Residents

Of the total number of responses to our survey by city and town, just over 50% (201) were from Novato, by far the largest response to our survey. By the numbers:

Meeting Attendance	65.2% have attended at least one meeting annually
Engagement Interest	68.7% want to be engaged more
PE Satisfaction	50.7% are at least "somewhat satisfied" by efforts
Detailed PE Issues	Full consideration, advance information, and ample opportunity are ranked worst
PE Tool Awareness	Website and email are most familiar

Some of the views expressed by Novato residents were:

A few Council members in Novato are excellent in answering questions, etc. City staff in some areas however, have already made their decision before public engagement. The public engagement is a mandatory formality only.

One has to be very civic minded to follow all that is going on in the City and where the information is. I get lost trying to find which place has the information I need - and often would prefer a 'layperson's summary rather than legalize [sic]. It's a full time job (exhausting!) trying to keep up with what is happening and I have only focused on the things I am involved with and rely on others to spread the word on something that requires additional attention.

⁴⁰ "List of California locations by income." *Wikipedia*. Accessed 28 Apr. 2017.

⁴¹ "Communications & Community Engagement Plan." *City of Novato*. 2015-2016.

Public communication engagement efforts are improving online (Nextdoor.com for example). That said, I would hope that the intention of the public engagement efforts are genuine and that City truly wants to hear from its taxpayers and residents. More often than not it seems that the community is being "engaged" so that the City can check that box off without really caring about Citizen opinion.

Would like to see more communication and outreach in Spanish to engage our Spanish-speaking population

I would like to be able to provide feedback online instead of having to attend in person a meeting (at a time I usually can't attend) in order to provide feedback.

The city is misleading in its very few and limited attempts at notifying the public. It's usually after the fact news and only very few members of the community seem to know what's going on.

Plenty of opportunity is given, not much taken due to citizen inertia. Sometimes people who have not taken the opportunity to voice their opinions at the onset of a proposal will later become very vocal about quashing it. You can bring a horse to water.

View from the Media

* IJ Editorials in January and November 2016 discussed the dissatisfaction of Novato residents concerning the City's decision-making process preceding installation of solar panels over the parking lot at the Hamilton pool. This led to a resident's lawsuit and increasing costs. The City apologized for not doing a better job of involving neighbors in the decision-making process – a dialogue that the IJ commented, "should have taken place long before the city installed [the panels]." ⁴² Novato subsequently submitted an article for publication in the IJ stating its commitment to public engagement and transparency. ⁴³

Six weeks later, the IJ commented that the City had used unclear language ("bureaucratese") in titling a City Council agenda item. ⁴⁴

In April 2017, the IJ complimented the City of Novato for agreeing to engage residents concerning proposals to develop three city-owned sites at Hamilton. ⁴⁵

Summary

- Many of the responses from the public echoed the issues reported in *Views From the Media*.
- While the City of Novato has been increasingly using more communication tools, it appears that the City could better engage the public earlier on topics that are likely to be controversial.

⁴² "Solar panels a test for Novato's leaders." *Marin Independent Journal*. 14 Jan. 2016.; "Is Novato legal clash worth the cost?" *Marin Independent Journal*. 20 Nov. 2016.

⁴³ "Novato is leading on community engagement and transparency." *Marin Independent Journal*. 14 Dec. 2016.

⁴⁴ "Novato should have delayed TAM tax vote." *Marin Independent Journal*. 30 Jan. 2017; "Novato, TAM display mastery of bureaucratese." *Marin Independent Journal*. 31 Jan. 2017.

⁴⁵ "A little time would be well invested in Hamilton." *Marin Independent Journal*. 3 April 2017.

Snapshot Ross

The town of Ross has a population of 2,415 with a median family income of \$200,800. Ross is the second smallest municipality in Marin. It has by far the smallest percentage of renter-occupied housing units at 14%, indicating the vast majority of residents own their own homes. Ross has the largest percentage of families with kids under 18 at 43% and, along with Belvedere, has the highest percentage of residents with bachelor's degrees in Marin at 82%. With the national average at 22%, Ross is clearly a highly-educated community.

View from the Town

Ross also does not have and does not plan to adopt a formal PE Plan. The rationale for not adopting a plan mostly revolves around engagement as it currently happens in this very small town:

Towns and cities that are small-scaled in size and resources generally conduct business in a somewhat more organic fashion that naturally relies on active citizen engagement to accomplish the public's business. Even if there is no adopted Plan, towns become acutely aware of issues that matter to their community, the stakeholders and others who are impacted, and the formal and informal methodologies to inform, consult, and/or engage. As such, public engagement principles and practices become naturally embedded into operations.

Much of the PE that goes on in Ross is centered on land use decisions. As such, Ross fostered a process conducive to dialogue and collaborative problem solving that offered early opportunity for feedback regarding creation of their Advisory Design Review group and procedure. Other recent PE processes conducted in Ross include extensive community engagement regarding improvement to Winship Bridge (two public meetings were held at the bridge itself), and a survey about short-term rentals that generated significantly more public participation and comment than previous Town Council meetings or public workshops.

View from the Residents

There were four respondents to our survey and no comments regarding resident views of PE efforts in Ross.

View from the Media

* At a meeting of the town council in July of last year, Ross, like other Marin municipalities, addressed the issue of whether short-term rentals should be operating unregulated in their town. At the time, with no regulations or definitions on residential use, the town's municipal code was unclear regarding permitted use. But unlike other cities or towns, Ross – which operates on a much smaller scale – has no hotels so has not collected transient occupancy taxes. The discussion started in January 2015, but according to the IJ, “The council put off making any formal decision due to a lack of rental activity.” Nevertheless, the Ross planning manager stated, “There is merit in fine-tuning some of our definitions.” And not surprisingly, “Residents are on both sides of the issue.” Plans for a future meeting on the issue was announced.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Rodriguez, Adrian. “[Ross considers short-term rental regulations.](#)” *Marin Independent Journal*. 12 July 2016.

* During a “two-hour, impassioned debate” at a packed Town Hall in Ross in December of 2016, officials decided to go forward to restore a town-owned house instead of tearing it down to make way for a park designed for preschoolers. Residents on both sides of the issue were involved: 27 members of the public spoke, 69 pieces of correspondence received, and 109 signatures collected (in favor of the park). The IJ reported that the Town Council voted 4-1 to restore the house, which could bring the town \$10,000 to \$20,000 annually in rental income. It was suggested that, “the council form a committee of parents that could study options for the conceived playground elsewhere. The council felt that might be the best approach.”⁴⁷

Summary

- Ross considers itself too small for a formal PE Plan, addressing and reacting to issues as necessary.
- The Grand Jury did not receive enough responses from residents to make any relevant observations.
- Ross may be small, but issues can be seen as “big” when it comes to public engagement.

⁴⁷ Rodriguez, Adrian. “[Ross nature park nixed to restore workforce house.](#)” *Marin Independent Journal*. 9 Dec. 2016.

Snapshot San Anselmo

San Anselmo has a population of 12,336 with a median family income of \$122,800. As with other areas in Marin, parts of San Anselmo are unincorporated, including Sleepy Hollow and an area at the end of San Francisco Boulevard. Six percent of San Anselmo’s population is less than 5 years old and 13.5% are over 65.

View from the Town

San Anselmo does not currently have a PE Plan, but says they intend to design a “Public Engagement Guide” this year, formalizing and instituting a “guide for use by staff that will be modified as new methods of reaching the public are created, discovered or changed.” San Anselmo stated, “We want people to become involved, ask questions, provide feedback and be part of the decision-making process. We feel that making the effort to get the community involved is integral to our work.”

The town already makes use of many modern platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, webcasting, texting, and Nextdoor as well as workshops and surveys. However, San Anselmo’s responses to our Information Request indicate that these tools are not necessarily used to collect community feedback regarding their PE processes.

Views From the Residents

There were 19 responses from San Anselmo residents. By the numbers:

Meeting Attendance	57.9% have attended at least one meeting annually
Engagement Interest	78.9% want to be engaged more
PE Satisfaction	52.6% are at least “somewhat satisfied” by efforts
Detailed PE Issues	Full consideration, advance information, and clear language are ranked worst
PE Tool Awareness	Website, email, and surveys are most familiar

Some of their responses to our invitation to make general comments are below:

At all levels staff attempts citizen input to significant and small issues effecting [sic] residents.

San Anselmo refuses to do anything about the flooding other than purchase expensive buildings and let them sit there. They do nothing about cleaning the creek and spend all of our money on consultants saying in 5 years they will do something.

Language for town council meetings are dense, not accessible.

By the time an item reaches Town Council it seems a decision has already been made and the input at the meeting is disregarded.

It's a two way street: citizens must make an appropriate effort to stay informed.

View from the Media

* Flooding and how to deal with it continues to be a major concern in Ross Valley. Over 100 people showed up to a “scoping session” held in February of this year to consider the environmental impacts of a major flood prevention program that residents say, “could undermine their livelihood,” according the Marin IJ. Several San Anselmo merchants at the meeting maintained that some of the [plan’s] “structural modifications” would mean “the possible loss and relocation of beloved businesses.” One resident stated, “County officials should be more clear in their presentations and that when addressing a building, rather than numbering it as one, two or three, it should be called by the business it represents.” Other residents voiced anxieties over the plan that ranged from concern for coho and steelhead salmon populations to the safety and effectiveness of detention basins.

The county capital planning and project manager has “heard the frustration” and “staff has been working to keep up the pace on communicating and making progress. We are trying to take this as a watershed community wide approach and everyone’s participation is going to be really important.”⁴⁸

Summary

- San Anselmo has no PE Plan to guide them yet. Community feedback could be better prioritized.
- Public wants to be engaged more. Clear and advance information would help to achieve this.
- The media echoes what the public says.

⁴⁸ Rodriguez, Adrian. “Debate continues over Ross Valley flood plan.” *Marin IJ*. 17 Feb. 2017.

Snapshot San Rafael

San Rafael is a city and the county seat of Marin. According to the 2010 census, San Rafael has a population of 57,713 which makes it the largest municipality in Marin. The median family income is \$96,000. Although parts of Santa Venetia, Lucas Valley, Marinwood and other unincorporated areas have a San Rafael address and zip code, residents of these areas responded to our survey as residents of unincorporated Marin. If all residents with either 94901 or 94903 zip codes were included in San Rafael census data, the total would be over 70,000 or almost 25% of Marin's total population. San Rafael is nearly 71% white with the largest Hispanic or Latino population in Marin at about 30%, or 17,000 people as of 2010.

View from the City

The City of San Rafael has the largest population of any municipality in Marin. As such, in January of 2015 they adopted a formal PE Plan: the *Community Engagement Action Plan*.⁴⁹ To get there, though, they first conducted a survey and held community workshops. Goals included demystifying local government, engaging earlier, and enhancing their technological tools.

San Rafael's plan calls for considering the hiring of a Public Information Officer or Communications Coordinator. The city states that "...our commitment to robust community engagement continues – we recognize the value that [such] engagement brings to civic discourse and decision-making."

San Rafael's newly-adopted Community Engagement Action Plan was put to use right away. Key tenets from this plan were developed into a specific communications plan⁵⁰ that addressed ongoing efforts to rebuild two fire stations and establish a new downtown public safety center. Members of the public and key stakeholder groups were involved from the outset and information has been made available via email, Nextdoor, YouTube, and open house events at the fire stations.

The Grand Jury commends San Rafael for receiving the Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership's highest award (Platinum) for public engagement in 2016. Further evidence of San Rafael's public engagement efforts can be seen on their "Engage and Connect" website page.⁵¹

⁴⁹ "Community Engagement Action Plan." *City of San Rafael*.

⁵⁰ "Essential Facilities Communications Plan." *City of San Rafael*.

⁵¹ "Engage and Connect." *City of San Rafael*. Accessed on 28 Apr. 2017.

Views from the Residents

A total of 78 San Rafael residents responded to our survey. By the numbers:

Meeting Attendance	66.7% have attended at least one meeting annually
Engagement Interest	78.2% want to be engaged more
PE Satisfaction	56.4% are at least "somewhat satisfied" by efforts
Detailed PE Issues	Inform, full consideration, and advance information are ranked worst
PE Tool Awareness	Website, email, surveys, and social media are most familiar

There was a mix of views on the City's efforts to engage the public, including a number of respondents who felt the City was not responsive or made decisions prior to fully engaging the public. Some of their responses are noted below:

With the drop in daily newspaper readership we don't really know what's on the city council agenda, though I suppose you can go to the city's website and it should be there. A lot of announcements about what civic meetings are going on where and when are posted by neighbors on the nextdoor.com website.

Council demonstrates openness to community input. Staff have worked well with Gerstle Park neighborhood on many topics. I observe a sense of pride in the work staff do.

They sometimes reach out but do not listen. The process seems designed to support decisions already made. Feel used and manipulated

Seems decisions take forever to be made...also how the place works seems stacked against the regular people. Only those who know what's what in the civil domain can get things done. But I'm trying to speak out.

Need to create more awareness of communication channels.

View from the Media

* The IJ has commended San Rafael's outreach inviting residents to become involved in fire station design⁵² and public input for the redesign of Albert Park.⁵³ Marin IJ's February 2016 editorial had this to say about the fire station project:

San Rafael is holding the door wide open for the public to get involved in the design of fire stations those taxpayers are paying for.

Instead of keeping all of those decisions limited to the agendas of the City Council and its boards, the city has posted architects' drawings of proposed changes online and held open houses at the sites before Wednesday's meeting of the city Design Review Board.

The process is an invitation to local residents to be part of the process.

It was noted that instead of relegating public outreach to the background since the tax was approved, the City has made an effort to keep residents engaged in the decision making.

⁵² "City Hall seeks public comment on San Rafael fire stations." *Marin Independent Journal*. 15 Feb. 2016.; "City Hall seeks public comment on San Rafael fire stations." *Marin Independent Journal*. 15 Feb. 2016.

⁵³ Rodriguez, Adrian. "San Rafael's Albert Park redesign near final hurdles." *Marin Independent Journal*. 20 March 2017.

* After two years and multiple public meetings, San Rafael's City Council is expected to consider an upgrade to Albert Park. Gathering over 60 responses suggesting improvements for the park, the City determined that the play area was in need of an update. After hearing support for the project, and in concert with a citizen's group's efforts toward park cleanups, the City Council allocated \$250,000 in funding. If the commission approves the plan, construction could begin by the end of the year.

Summary

- San Rafael has a PE Plan, created in part with information from the community, that is utilized for effective PE.
- There is already a high level of engagement by the public, but interest in engagement is even higher. The public is calling on the City to listen more.
- Media reports good efforts on the part of the City and its residents, resulting in action.

Snapshot Sausalito

Sausalito has a population of 7,061 and a median family income of \$180,900. Owner-occupied and renter-occupied homes are nearly equal at 50.8% and 49.2% respectively. Twenty-one percent of Sausalito's population is over 65 and 4.3% are under 5. There are over 400 houseboats in Sausalito⁵⁴ (many of which are outside the city limits) and although the resident population is relatively small, weekends and vacation times bring thousands of tourists to the town, impacting the community in multiple ways including traffic, commerce and bicycle safety issues.

View from the City

Although currently without a formal PE Plan, Sausalito says it intends to adopt one. According to the town, "Sausalito is proud to have a highly engaged population of well-educated and active community members." They describe their PE process as "...on a project-by-project basis [where] individual community outreach plans are created to ensure that the public is provided with more and better information and is afforded all opportunities to influence public decisions."

An example of this approach is the ongoing Ferry Landing project where "The public engagement process has resulted in the City challenging the originally-proposed design in order to tailor the project appropriately." Since early 2015, when the City Council approved a public review process regarding this project, Sausalito has provided many opportunities to engage their residents. These included holding a number of stakeholder meetings; two public hearings; the installation of an exhibit in City Hall; and an on-the-water buoy demonstration to give the public a visual representation of the dimensions of the project. The City states, "Although the project is still ongoing (currently pending a lawsuit), the public engagement process has resulted in the City challenging the originally-proposed design in order to tailor the project appropriately."

According to the official Nextdoor page of the City of Sausalito,⁵⁵ the city librarian now also serves as Director of Communications for the City of Sausalito.

⁵⁴ Carber, Kristine. "Floating through life / Sausalito houseboat community will show off its one-of-a-kind dwellings on Sunday." *SFGate*. 4 Oct. 2003.

⁵⁵ "City of Sausalito." *Nextdoor*. Accessed 28 Apr. 2017

Views from the Residents

There were five respondents to our survey and one comment regarding resident views of PE efforts in Sausalito:

The history of Sausalito contains repeated episodes of citizens becoming engaged only after becoming aware of a decision (or near decision), with staff maintaining that "we held xxx hearings and surveys months (or years) ago" to justify the action. City agendas and packets come out on the Friday afternoon (late) before the next Tuesday's meeting, leaving little time to review or mount participation. Important issues have been decided late at night, or at midday during the work week, or during summer/winter vacation periods. Often the same people, or people with special interests, are appointed to committees/commissions. Staff and Council have long made overtures and efforts to include "stakeholders": ie nonresident tourists, bicyclists, development interests, non-resident property and business owners - whose voices and interests can hijack the decision making process.

View from the Media

* A Superior Court judge has ruled against the Golden Gate Bridge district in its attempt to get parts of a Sausalito lawsuit over a planned \$11 million ferry terminal thrown out.⁵⁶ Filing the lawsuit last September, Sausalito alleged the bridge district is violating a 1995 lease agreement that requires city approval for "major alterations" to the ferry landing. In 2014 the district proposed that a new dock replace the current, aging float, "which will not meet future federal rules for accessibility." Residents claimed that the proposed larger design "didn't fit the waterfront character of the small town and would only encourage more people – including tourists on bicycles – to crowd the area. Others said the new dock was a needed safety improvement." The district is expected to challenge the legal grounds of the case on May 4, when another hearing will take place.

* In December 2016 Sausalito became the first city in Marin to approve an age-friendly action plan aimed at seniors. The city's Age-Friendly Task Force crafted the plan with the hope that some elements could be included in the general plan. They began meeting in April 2013 and created a survey "to determine how Sausalito would be accessible and inclusive for its older residents." Along with transportation and housing, "social participation, respect, social inclusion, civic participation, employment, communication, information along with community support, health services and safety are other topics addressed in the action plan."⁵⁷

Summary

- Sausalito intends to adopt a PE Plan. Currently, PE is conducted on a project-by-project basis.
- The Grand Jury did not receive enough responses from residents to make any relevant observations.
- Sausalito is attempting to put the city's interests first in the face of change. They recognize their aging population.

⁵⁶ Prado, Mark. "Sausalito scores legal victory in ferry dock dispute." *Marin Independent Journal*. 25 April 2017.

⁵⁷ Prado, Mark. "Sausalito passes first senior action plan in county." *Marin Independent Journal*. 20 Dec. 2016.

Snapshot Tiburon

Tiburon has a population of 8,962 and a median family income of \$170,000. Twenty-one percent of its residents are over 65 and one-third are families with children under 18.

View from the Town

Tiburon does not have and has no plans to adopt a formal PE Plan since, “At this point, a demonstrated need has not been established.” With knowledge of “principles of effective public relations and interrelationships with community groups and agencies, private businesses and firms, and other levels of government” as a stated essential qualification of the town manager, Tiburon has incorporated elements of PE into at least one job description.⁵⁸

One of Tiburon’s most active community issues is that of residential building design and review. A significant PE process recently completed in Tiburon was their Building and Planning Forum, a public discussion led by an outside facilitator. The forum provided an opportunity for residents, contractors and architects to hear “a brief review from staff on the Planning and Building process in Tiburon and then have an opportunity to ask questions.” This resulted in the town making several immediate changes to their processes and studying several other potential future changes.

Views from the Residents

There were two respondents to our survey and no comments regarding resident views of PE efforts in Tiburon.

View from the Media

* The Marin IJ reported in April that a neighborhood group in Tiburon has proposed removing a grove of 42 trees along Tiburon Boulevard, most of them on town property.⁵⁹ They say the trees are a fire and safety hazard and have offered to pay for their removal. Some opponents, however, think that an underlying motive of the plan is to open up bay views for homes on the hillside. In a similar attempt to get the trees removed in 1996, “Residents tried to get the Town Council to weigh in, but they failed to produce a plan that would be paid for by the homeowners.” The current proposal for the grove was to be aired at an upcoming Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission meeting at Tiburon’s Town Hall. More than 50 letters and petitions on both sides have been submitted to the town.

* A plan to improve bicycle routes is expected to find its way to Tiburon’s Planning Commission and Town Council by June. “The plan is part of a \$200,000 grant-funded push by the Transportation Authority of Marin. The goal is to develop multimodal-friendly communities countywide that improve safety – and to identify gaps in bicycle and pedestrian connectivity with neighboring towns and cities,” said the Marin IJ in April.⁶⁰ While the plan is aimed at making the roads and paths safe for everyone, accommodating children is a specific goal. But some who live on a particular stretch of what is part of The Bay Trail are concerned that the plan will encourage even more bikers, who “run through frequently in droves...and [the road] has become dangerous,”

⁵⁸ “Town Manager.” *Town of Tiburon*. Sep. 1994.

⁵⁹ Rodriguez, Adrian. “Tiburon tree killing plan has neighbors barking.” *Marin Independent Journal*. 23 April 2017.

⁶⁰ Rodriguez, Adrian. “Tiburon’s bike and pedestrian draft plan stirs debate over Bay Trail route.” *Marin Independent Journal*. 3 April 2017.

according to one resident. Officials have attempted to compromise with the residents by proposing signage and “slow zones.”

Summary

- The Town of Tiburon does not think there is a need for a formal PE Plan. Planning and design issues are a recurring topic of engagement.
- The Grand Jury did not receive enough responses from residents to make any relevant observations.
- The media reports additional issues of importance to residents that are addressed at town meetings.

Snapshot County of Marin

Marin is the fourth-smallest county in California by land area. It has a population of 252,409 with a median family income of \$120,000. Census data from 2010 shows 72.8% of Marin's population is white, 15.5% Hispanic or Latino, 5.4% Asian and 2.6% Black or African American. Like many California cities and counties, the Hispanic or Latino population has increased over the years, going from 4.2% in 1980 to 15.5% in 2010. Age distribution is consistent with average demographics in Marin towns and cities with:

- Children under 5 = 5.5%
- Age 5 to 17 = 15.2%
- Age 18 to 64 = 62.6%
- Over 65 = 16.7%

According to an article in the Huffington Post, "An estimated 54 percent of adults 25 and older in Marin have a bachelor's degree and 22.5 percent have an advanced degree, more than in any other California county and among the highest rates nationwide, according to new survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau."⁶¹ The average number of adults in the U.S. with at least a bachelor's degree is 22%.

View from the County

In January of 2012 Marin County adopted the *County of Marin Public Communications Plan*.⁶² With a clear vision, mission and strategy, the plan speaks to specific strategies and actions. As stated on the first page, "The County's approach to public communications is grounded in its mission statement and input from Board of Supervisor members, community partners and staff." The County's mission statement, which appears both on the County website and in their Plan, is "...to provide excellent services that support healthy, safe and sustainable communities; preserve Marin's unique environmental heritage; and encourage meaningful participation in the governance of the County by all." An ongoing commitment to public engagement is also stated in the *County of Marin 5 Year Business Plan 2015-2020*, which among other things focuses on being a responsive government.⁶³

Clearly, PE is important to and actively practiced by our county representatives and employees. However, some of the County's PE processes differ in scope from the individual cities and towns discussed above. Because of the size of their constituency, PE efforts are executed and spread out among supervisorial districts, departments, and agencies embedded within Marin's government. Therefore, Marin County discourages posting information in more than one location on their website. As a strategy that may effectively serve a single city or town, the County feels doing so only serves to sow confusion when navigating their intricate site. Likewise the question of whether or not (and how) an agency publishes a regular newsletter is more complicated for the County. With many different departments as well as the Board of Supervisors and their respective districts reporting to the public, multiple newsletters get curated and distributed, most of them online. The County commented that, "Above all, a resident's level of involvement in a County decision-making process greatly depends on that resident's personal investment in that topic or issue." In

⁶¹ Jason, Will. "Marin named California's most educated county." *Marin Independent Journal*. 21 April, 2013

⁶² "County of Marin Public Communications Plan." *County of Marin*. Jan. 2012.

⁶³ "County of Marin 5 Year Business Plan 2015-2020." *County of Marin*. Jan. 2012.

addition, the County said, "...decisions made by the Board of Supervisors tend to garner higher rates of engagement from the public."

The County cited its recent engagement process around medical cannabis dispensary bids as very successful. "Using targeted neighborhood outreach via Nextdoor.com combined with traditional outreach tactics (media outreach, mailers, etc.), residents in those potentially affected communities have been very engaged in the various public meetings held around the County and have been submitting relevant public feedback through the appropriate comment channels (letter and email)."

Views from the Residents

A total of 451 residents of both the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County responded to our survey. By the numbers:

Meeting Attendance	43.2% have attended at least one meeting annually
Engagement Interest	55.9% want to be engaged more
PE Satisfaction	37.3% are at least "somewhat satisfied" by efforts
Detailed PE Issues	Inform, full consideration, and advance information are ranked worst
PE Tool Awareness	Website, email, and social media are most familiar

Some of the views expressed by County residents were:

The county continuously selects Unincorporated Marin for any regulation that is likely to be opposed by the cities. This singles out Unincorporated Marin for all the bad or trial regulation instead of working with the Incorporated areas to make sure everyone is served consistently.

The time of the Board of Supervisor meetings is challenging for those of us who work! Please consider making them at a later time during the day. Thank you!

I get most of my County updates on Nextdoor, and appreciate the notifications and information.

If I didn't subscribe to the Marin IJ I doubt that I would have much real information on actions under consideration by the county. Perhaps better outreach to the public is in order.

Three minutes before the Board of Supervisors is inadequate. There should be extensive workshops in all locations of the County, not just in southern Marin County.

County is in a tough place. They are the City Council to the unincorporated areas but for those who have a City Council...outreach from the County is not as vital.

View from the Media

* Since the IJ's December 2016 article urging the County to obtain more public involvement in setting annual goals, recent articles note that the County has begun public meetings with residents in the Ross Valley Flood Control District⁶⁴ and launched an Open Data Portal.⁶⁵

* In addition, two County supervisors called for public input and discussion regarding the effects of climate change on Marin by announcing three public meetings on the subject. "There will be no progress without public engagement," stated the authors in an April 2017 submission to the Marin Independent Journal.⁶⁶

* Officials again had their say in the IJ in March, stating, "We believe now is the time to step up and get more fully engaged, right here, where we live. Civic engagement. At the local level. Serving our neighborhoods and cities and towns. Attending a city or town council meeting or a Board of Supervisors meeting may not be glamorous but it matters. Or, attend a local flood control zone meeting – you can learn a lot about what we're doing and what needs to be done to protect our future. Call or email your elected officials – we want to hear from you and we can do our jobs better if you're in touch with us."⁶⁷

Summary

- Marin County has both a formal PE Plan and a *5 Year Business Plan* that focus on public communication and government response, respectively. Engagement efforts are relatively more complex at the county level.
- Less than half of survey respondents reported having attended at least one meeting per year but over half say they want to be engaged more. PE satisfaction is low.
- Reports in the IJ show the County is making efforts to encourage the public to engage more and is creating opportunity to do so.

⁶⁴ Rojas, Raul. "Public participation an important part of flood-control planning." *Marin Independent Journal*. 15 Feb. 2017.

⁶⁵ "Marin launches online trove of public data." *Marin Independent Journal*. 20 Feb. 2017.

⁶⁶ Sears, Kate and Connolly, Damon. "Marin Voice: The county moves forward with climate action." *Marin Independent Journal*. 17 Apr. 2017.

⁶⁷ Sears, Kate and Fryday, Josh. "Marin Voice: Whatever cause is important to you — try to engage locally." *Marin Independent Journal*. 11 Mar. 2017.

Sharing Our Data

As stated in our public PE surveys, “The Marin County Civil Grand Jury is seeking your input. The information provided will be treated confidentially by the Grand Jury for its research and report: Your name and email will not be shared with anyone, and your responses will not be attributed to you.”

With the rise of the Open Data Movement (examples include: Data.gov, the Data Foundation, OpenGov, Marin County’s Open Data Portal, and the City of Sausalito’s Budget Transparency Tool), we wanted other organizations – including future grand juries – to be able to leverage our public data. Therefore, we are sharing all the public survey responses (removing all personal identification) in two spreadsheets (one for Unincorporated Marin and one for the towns and cities of Marin) online here: <https://goo.gl/hdWGf8>.

CONCLUSION

Public engagement is at the heart of inclusive governance. It should be the responsibility of each agency to give full consideration to public input before making decisions that affect the community-at-large. The Grand Jury agrees with agency leaders that public engagement need not be a “one size fits all” strategy; it should vary based on the needs of the community. Whatever engagement approach an agency chooses, we believe that simply having good intentions to engage is not sufficient – each agency should formally state its public engagement plan or guidelines. A published statement (in the form of a municipal resolution, for example) would ensure that the staff, the public, and community-based organizations work to solve common problems using transparent processes. In fact, the process of developing and publishing such a statement is another opportunity to understand the needs of the community.

Agencies should also collaborate with community-based organizations (CBOs) to help reach traditionally disenfranchised groups. Such groups are often unaware of issues likely to affect them until last-minute decision-making. Collaboration with civic leaders and CBOs can increase both the amount and quality of public engagement.

Consistent public engagement is a goal that requires agency commitment and adaptation. Public engagement is not something done to simply “calm the public” over controversial issues. PE must be used early and effectively to build trust, achieve community buy-in and support for agency decisions with less contentiousness. The PE Plan or Guidelines should be revisited often to ensure that it continues to “work” for everyone. Otherwise, PE becomes just another box that an agency must check-off rather than a beneficial experience for all involved.

A fundamental premise of engaging the community is providing clear, consistent, easily available modes of communication. Many of the residents responding to our survey reported being unaware of available resources for obtaining and communicating information. Over a quarter of respondents reported not knowing whether their local government agencies provided any avenues at all to engage the public. It is important that the public understands the availability of these avenues and whether agencies are doing what is needed to make it known that such avenues exist.

Equally important is the participation of the people of Marin in the public engagement dialogue. Residents frequently become involved in their community when a specific issue arises that is of particular interest or consequence to them personally. When that issue is resolved, how active or concerned or even interested do they remain in other areas of their community? At its most effective, public engagement is a path to inclusive governance.

FINDINGS

- F1. Having a formal PE Plan or PE Guidelines in place helps to foster better and faster community involvement.
- F2. Not everyone conducts PE in the same way.
- F3. Agencies' perception of the need for PE is in response to a controversy, not an ongoing process.
- F4. Smaller municipalities do not necessarily have the need, the budget or the will to develop a formal plan.
- F5. Larger municipalities recognize the need for a formal PE Plan.
- F6. Some agencies are close to having a PE Plan; it wouldn't take too much effort to formalize one or to develop PE Guidelines.
- F7. All Marin agencies agree that PE is important, and all are engaged to some degree.
- F8. There is a disconnect between how agencies rate their PE efforts and how the public views their efforts.
- F9. Most agencies believe they are doing a good job of PE.
- F10. Marinites want to be engaged more.
- F11. The public perceives a need for more and better engagement opportunities, including follow-up.
- F12. Only a few municipalities have an employee dedicated to PE.
- F13. Building relationships between civic leaders and community-based organizations contributes to the inclusion of traditionally disenfranchised groups, increasing the amount and quality of PE – and providing support for the agencies.
- F14. Marin agencies are using various and multiple modes of technology to engage the public, but the public isn't necessarily aware of this.
- F15. Moving beyond the minimum requirements of The Brown Act is essential for modern day PE.
- F16. Marin agencies and their public are statistically comparable to the Bay Area in terms of PE satisfaction and involvement levels.
- F17. PE is a two-way street, requiring vigilance on the part of the public as well as the agencies who serve them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Each agency without a formal PE Plan should develop either a PE Plan or PE Guidelines tailored to the needs of their public and publish the results.
- R2. Each agency should obtain input from the public in the planning and design or update of its plan/guidelines.
- R3. Agency managers should regularly share their PE Plans and “lessons learned” with their counterparts in other Marin agencies.
- R4. Each agency should provide early and ample opportunity for PE in the form of proactive engagement in order to ensure that the public is aware of all their PE opportunities.
- R5. Post-engagement, each agency should follow up with the public, informing them of the results of projects and issues.
- R6. Each agency should create an easy-to-find area on their website dedicated to describing current community issues and explaining how the public can get involved.
- R7. Each agency should make PE a required responsibility of at least one staff person and publicize that responsibility.
- R8. Each agency should offer regular PE professional development to its staff.
- R9. Each agency should develop meaningful and ongoing partnerships with their local community-based organizations.
- R10. Each agency should include on all written communications the social media platforms they use.
- R11. Each agency should communicate and emphasize to the public the importance of participation in PE.
- R12. Each agency should publish an annual report describing the effectiveness of their PE efforts.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal code section 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

From the following governing bodies:

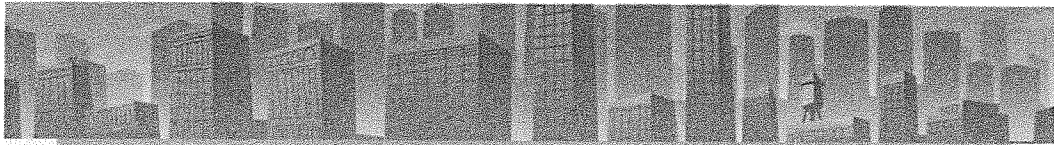
- City of Belvedere (R1-R12)
- City of Larkspur (R1-R12)
- City of Mill Valley (R2-R12)
- City of Novato (R2-R12)
- City of San Rafael (R2-R12)
- City of Sausalito (R1-R12)
- County of Marin (R2-R12)
- Town of Corte Madera (R1-R12)
- Town of Fairfax (R1-R12)
- Town of Ross (R1-R12)
- Town of San Anselmo (R1-R12)
- Town of Tiburon (R1-R12)

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted in accordance with Penal Code section 933 (c) and subject to the notice, agenda and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

Note: At the time this report was prepared information was available at the websites listed.

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury. The California State Legislature has stated that it intends the provisions of Penal Code Section 929 prohibiting disclosure of witness identities to encourage full candor in testimony in Grand Jury investigations by protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in any Civil Grand Jury investigation.

APPENDIX A: Information Request From Agency



Public Engagement Information Request

* Required

Definitions

A. Public Engagement (PE): A broad range of methods through which government agencies provide the public with more and better information about, and meaningful opportunities to influence, public decisions.

B. PE Plan: A formal, written plan or policy that a government agency makes easily accessible to the public it serves and outlines the methods through which it provides the public with more and better information about, and meaningful opportunities to influence, public decisions.

C. Community-Based Organization (CBO): A group of individuals organized by and for a particular community of people or entities based on shared interests and/or attributes. Members may include various stakeholders, such as the public, advocacy groups, businesses and business leaders.

D. Transparency Portal: An easy to find agency website location containing or providing access to anticipated information the public needs from all agency departments.

E. "You" or "Your": The agency responding to this survey

Name of Responding Agency *

Your answer

Your Name *

Your answer

Your Email *

Your answer

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS

APPENDIX A: Information Request From Agency (cont'd)

1. Please state whether you agree or disagree that each of the following is a potential benefit of effective PE: *

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Improved agency decision-making and actions, with better impacts and outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More community buy-in and support for agency decisions, with less contentiousness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Better identification of public's values, ideas and recommendations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More informed residents--about issues and about local agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More civil discussions and decision-making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faster project implementation with less need to revisit again	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More trust in each other and in local government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Higher rates of community participation and leadership development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Do you have and follow a PE Plan? *

Yes

No

3a. When did you formally adopt your PE Plan? *

If your agency does not have and follow a PE plan, please enter N/A

Your answer _____

3b. When did you last review and update your PE Plan? *

If your agency does not have and follow a PE plan, please choose N/A

Within the last year

Within the last 3 years

Within the last 5 years

N/A

3c. Do you have a commitment to review and update your PE Plan periodically? *

If you do not have and follow a PE Plan, please choose N/A.

Yes

No

N/A

APPENDIX A: Information Request From Agency (cont'd)

4. If you do not have a PE Plan, do you intend to design one? *

If you already have a PE Plan, please choose N/A

- Yes
- No
- N/A

5. If you do not intend to design a PE Plan, please state why. *

If you already have or intend to design a PE Plan, please enter N/A

Your answer

6. Have you adopted a resolution demonstrating a commitment to effective PE? *

- Yes
- No

Principles Of Effective Public Engagement: Inclusive Planning

¶ The planning and design of a public engagement process includes input from appropriate local officials as well as from members of intended participant communities.

7. Have you developed a current database or contact list of potentially interested residents and CBOs in order to engage them in your PE processes? *

- Yes
- No

8. Did you (or will you) obtain input from CBOs and other members of the public in the planning and design of your existing (or potential) PE Plan? *

If you do not already have or intend to design a PE Plan, please choose N/A.

- Yes
- No
- N/A

APPENDIX A: Information Request From Agency (cont'd)

9. Please state whether you agree or disagree that each of the following is an area for application of PE: *

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
Parks & Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Land Use & Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation & Infrastructure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Law Enforcement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Homelessness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electoral/Voting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Budgeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health/Social Services Delivery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Immigrant Integration/Related Issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pensions & Other Postemployment Benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Principles of Effective Public Engagement: Transparency

There is clarity and transparency about public engagement process, sponsorship, purpose, design, and how decision makers will use the process results.

APPENDIX A: Information Request From Agency (cont'd)

10. Please check any and all of the following strategies that you use to improve transparency in your PE process: *

	Use	Don't Use
Publish a newsletter regularly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Distribute that newsletter by USMail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Distribute that newsletter by Email	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Distribute that newsletter through Website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintain a website page where recent community news can be accessed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offer opportunities to the public you serve to view draft budgets online and engage in the budgeting process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your website includes a Transparency Portal (see Definition above)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accept online public records requests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regularly post frequently requested public records on your website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Principles Of Effective Public Engagement: Authentic Intent

¶ A primary purpose of the public engagement process is to generate public views and ideas to help shape local government action or policy, rather than persuade residents to accept a decision that has already been made.

11. Do you have any communications that contain "government-speak," "legalese" or similar jargon that most people would have trouble understanding? *

- Yes
- No

12. If so, are you considering revision of these types of communications in order to make them more understandable? *

If not, please choose N/A

- Yes
- No
- N/A

APPENDIX A: Information Request From Agency (cont'd)

13. Please check any and all of the following strategies that you use to improve the authentic intent of your PE process: *

	Regularly Use	Sometimes Use	Don't Use
PE is an assigned responsibility in the job description of one or more of your staff members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Within the past 24 months, staff members and/or elected officials of your agency have received training in how to identify and apply the most effective PE strategies to the range of issues that affect your agency and the public you serve.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summarize complex communications into key points.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use clear and simple language in your written and verbal communications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Distribute meaningful and timely information to allow public views and ideas to shape actions and policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Please rate the culture within your agency with respect to PE on the following: *

	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement
Thinking of PE as a method for improving decision-making rather than being the same as public relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Viewing members of the public as partners rather than clients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Giving full consideration to public input before making decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making proactive efforts to contact and engage community members in order to reach a broad spectrum of people, including those not typically "engaged"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Please describe a significant public engagement process that you completed during the past 24 months, including whether the process resulted in a more informed and/or better decision. *

Your answer

16. In your experience, what circumstances have prompted the public you serve to become broadly engaged in your decision making process? *

Your answer

Principles Of Effective Public Engagement: Breadth of Participation

§ The public engagement process includes people and viewpoints that are broadly reflective of the local agency's population of affected residents.

APPENDIX A: Information Request From Agency (cont'd)

17. Please check any and all of the following strategies that you use to broaden participation in your PE process: *

	Regularly Use	Sometimes Use	Don't Use
Build and nurture relationships with key individuals and CBOs that are broadly reflective of the public you serve	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regularly distribute information and solicit input on issues of potential importance to such key individuals and CBOs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide participants in your PE process with timely information and/or access to expertise consistent with the work you request them to do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your PE process reflects, honors and welcomes the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deliver PE presentations in high schools and community college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Principles Of Effective Public Engagement: Informed Participation

☒ Participants in the public engagement process have information and/or access to expertise consistent with the work that sponsors and conveners ask them to do.

18. Please check any and all of the following strategies that you use to improve informed participation in your PE process: *

	Regularly Use	Sometimes Use	Don't Use
Your website includes information that the public needs in order to understand issues, prior to agency decisions on those issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Such proactive information is available in more than one place on your website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Such proactive information is communicated on other platforms beyond your website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You have adopted and implement a procedure for timely identifying, collecting and distributing the information necessary for an effective PE process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CBOs and other members of the public receive the information they need, and with enough lead time, to participate effectively in your PE process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Principles Of Effective Public Engagement: Accessible Participation

☒ Public engagement processes are broadly accessible in terms of location, time, and language, and support the engagement of residents with disabilities

APPENDIX A: Information Request From Agency (cont'd)

19. Please check any and all of the following strategies that you use to improve accessibility in your PE process: *

	Regularly Use	Sometimes Use	Don't Use
Your website incorporates a "translate" function allowing visitors to read your site in languages other than English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Key print communications are translated into languages other than English and distributed or made available to the appropriate residents and community groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use PE processes that are broadly accessible in terms of location, time and language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use PE processes that support the engagement of residents with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deliver PE presentations in alternative living locations for the elderly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offer multiple ways, beyond attending public meetings, for contributing input and feedback during the PE process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Principles Of Effective Public Engagement: Appropriate Process

§ The public engagement process utilizes one or more discussion formats that are responsive to the needs of identified participant groups, and encourages full, authentic, effective and equitable participation consistent with process purposes. This may include relationships with existing community forums.

20. Please check any and all of the following strategies that you use to improve the process of effective PE:

	Regularly Use	Sometimes Use	Don't Use
Work with universities and community partners to organize training programs for CBOs, residents and neighborhood leaders so that they can gain the skills and experience needed for effective PE.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use local facilitators to help organize and run community dialogues and surveys to solicit resident input on key community issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Independent and impartial people moderate PE processes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Residents participate in the setting and defining of agendas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
With input from residents, you identify and use local experts as participants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You follow through on the input provided and make known to participants and the public how that input influenced your decisions or actions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX A: Information Request From Agency (cont'd)

21a. Please check any and all of the following ONLINE platforms that you use to engage and communicate with the public *

	Use	Don't Use
Public website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Webcasting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online Neighborhood sites (such as NextDoor)*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mobile apps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online forums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21b. Please check any and all of the following PRINT platforms that you use to engage and communicate with the public *

	Use	Don't Use
Public notices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Press releases	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Direct mail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newspaper ads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Magazine ads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX A: Information Request From Agency (cont'd)

21c. Please check any and all of the following IN-PERSON INTERACTIVE platforms that you use to engage and communicate with the public *

	Use	Don't Use
Public hearings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town Hall meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other large-action forums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small face-to-face discussions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal interactions (such as visits, speeches, in-person informational exchanges)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21d. Please check any and all of the following UNIDIRECTIONAL platforms that you use to engage and communicate with the public *

	Use	Don't Use
Surveys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Polls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local access television	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telephone message	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21e. Please describe any other communication methods you use:

Your answer

Principles Of Effective Public Engagement: Authentic Use of Information Received/Feedback/Evaluation

§ The ideas, preferences, and/or recommendations contributed by the public are documented and seriously considered by decision makers. Local officials communicate ultimate decisions back to process participants and the broader public, with a description of how the public input was considered and used. Sponsors and participants evaluate each public engagement process with the collected feedback and learning shared broadly and applied to future engagement efforts.

22. Do you regularly inform residents of follow-up, progress, outcomes, and impacts concerning decisions made based on public involvement? *

- Yes
- No

APPENDIX A: Information Request From Agency (cont'd)

23. Do you regularly assess your PE efforts for effectiveness and the public's satisfaction? *

Yes

No

24. Do you regularly ask participants for feedback and advice concerning their PE experience? *

Yes

No

25. Do you periodically evaluate and adjust your PE strategies with the collected feedback and your experience? *

Yes

No

Support for Information Given

26a. Please provide the URL or hardcopy of your PE Plan

See Definition above for PE Plan. If you have a hardcopy, please either scan the document and email to grandjury-audit@marincounty.org or mail to: Marin County Civil Grand Jury • 3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 275 • San Rafael, CA 94903

Your answer

26b. Please provide the URL or hardcopy of your resolution

As described in item 6. If you have a hardcopy, please either scan the document and email to grandjury-audit@marincounty.org or mail to: Marin County Civil Grand Jury • 3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 275 • San Rafael, CA 94903

Your answer

26c. Please provide the URL or hardcopy of your newsletter

If applicable, please provide the URL or hardcopy of your newsletter (either scan the newsletter and email to grandjury-audit@marincounty.org or mail to: Marin County Civil Grand Jury • 3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 275 • San Rafael, CA 94903)

Your answer


26d. Please provide the URL of your Transparency Portal

See Definition above for Transparency Portal. If applicable, please provide the URL of your Transparency Portal

Your answer

SUBMIT

APPENDIX B: Survey of Residents of Unincorporated Marin County



Public Engagement Survey For Residents Of Unincorporated Marin County

The Marin County Civil Grand Jury is seeking your input. The information provided will be treated confidentially by the Grand Jury for its research and report; your name and email will not be shared with anyone, and your responses will not be attributed to you.

Public engagement is a general term used for a broad range of methods through which government agencies provide the public with more and better information about, and meaningful opportunities to influence, government decisions. This survey respectfully requests your views on public engagement in the County of Marin.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact: GrandJury@MarinCounty.org

* Required

Your Name *

Your answer

Your Email *

Your answer

1. On average how many County public hearings, meetings and/or workshops do you attend each year? *

0

1-2

3 or more

Don't know

2. Are you interested in becoming more engaged in the decision making process of the County? *

Yes

No

Don't know

APPENDIX B: Survey of Residents of Unincorporated Marin County (cont'd)

3. How satisfied are you with the County's efforts to include the public in government decision making? *

Satisfied
 Somewhat satisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied
 Dissatisfied
 No opinion

4. Please rate how the County is doing in the following areas of public engagement: *

	Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent	Don't Know
County is making more of an effort to engage a wide variety of people in government decision making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
County engages the public in ways that are broadly accessible in terms of location, facilities, time, and language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Residents have ample opportunity to participate in County's government decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
County provides the public with the information it needs, and with enough lead time, to effectively engage in the decision making process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
County gives full consideration to public input before making government decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
County regularly informs residents of follow-up, progress, outcomes, and impacts concerning decisions made based on public involvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
County builds relationships with community-based groups and interested residents that are broadly reflective of the public it serves.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
County regularly uses clear and simple language in communications.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX B: Survey of Residents of Unincorporated Marin County (cont'd)

5. Does the County use the following to engage and communicate with the public? *


	Yes	No	Don't Know
Direct mail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newsletter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Surveys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Please provide any additional feedback on the County's public engagement efforts

Your answer

SUBMIT

APPENDIX C: Survey of Residents of Marin Cities & Incorporated Towns



Public Engagement Survey For Residents Of Marin Cities & Incorporated Towns

The Marin County Civil Grand Jury is seeking your input. The information provided will be treated confidentially by the Grand Jury for its research and report: your name and email will not be shared with anyone, and your responses will not be attributed to you.

Public engagement is a general term used for a broad range of methods through which government agencies provide the public with more and better information about, and meaningful opportunities to influence, government decisions. This survey respectfully requests your views on public engagement in your city or incorporated town, and the County of Marin.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact: GrandJury@MarinCounty.org

* Required

Your Name *

Your answer

Your Email *

Your answer

Your City or Incorporated Town of Residence *

Choose

Items 1-6 Apply To Your City Or Town Of Residence Only

1. On average how many city or town public hearings, meetings and/or workshops do you attend each year? *

0

1-2

3 or more

Don't know

APPENDIX C: Survey of Residents of Marin Cities & Incorporated Towns (cont'd)

2. Are you interested in becoming more engaged in the decision making process of your city or town? *

Yes

No

Don't know

3. How satisfied are you with your city's or town's efforts to include the public in government decision making? *

Satisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

No opinion

APPENDIX C: Survey of Residents of Marin Cities & Incorporated Towns (cont'd)

4. Please rate how your city or town is doing in the following areas: *

	Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent	Don't Know
Your city/town is making more of an effort to engage a wide variety of people in government decision making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your city/town engages the public in ways that are broadly accessible in terms of location, facilities, time, and language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Residents have ample opportunity to participate in your city's/town's government decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your city/town provides the public with the information it needs, and with enough lead time, to effectively engage in the decision making process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your city/town gives full consideration to public input before making government decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your city/town regularly informs residents of follow-up, progress, outcomes, and impacts concerning decisions made based on public involvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your city/town builds relationships with community-based groups and interested residents that are broadly reflective of the public it serves.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your city/town regularly uses clear and simple language in communications.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Does your city/town use the following to engage and communicate with the public? *

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Direct mail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newsletter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Surveys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX C: Survey of Residents of Marin Cities & Incorporated Towns (cont'd)

6. Please provide any additional feedback on your city's or town's public engagement efforts

Your answer

Items 7-12 Apply to The County of Marin Only

7. On average how many COUNTY public hearings, meetings and/or workshops do you attend each year? *

- 0
- 1-2
- 3 or more
- Don't know

8. Are you interested in becoming more engaged in the decision making process of THE COUNTY? *

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

9. How satisfied are you with THE COUNTY'S efforts to include the public in government decision making? *

- Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- No opinion

APPENDIX C: Survey of Residents of Marin Cities & Incorporated Towns (cont'd)

10. Please rate how THE COUNTY is doing in the following areas of public engagement:
*

	Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent	Don't Know
County is making more of an effort to engage a wide variety of people in government decision making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
County engages the public in ways that are broadly accessible in terms of location, facilities, time, and language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Residents have ample opportunity to participate in County's government decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
County provides the public with the information it needs, and with enough lead time, to effectively engage in the decision making process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
County gives full consideration to public input before making government decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
County regularly informs residents of follow-up, progress, outcomes, and impacts concerning decisions made based on public involvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
County builds relationships with community-based groups and interested residents that are broadly reflective of the public it serves.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
County regularly uses clear and simple language in communications.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Does THE COUNTY use the following to engage and communicate with the public? *

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Direct mail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newsletter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Surveys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Please provide any additional feedback on THE COUNTY'S public engagement efforts

Your answer

SUBMIT

APPENDIX D: Summary Agency Views of Public Engagement

Benefits of PE	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Improved decision making	12	0	0
More community buy-in	10	2	0
Better identification of public's values	11	1	0
More informed residents	11	1	0
More civil discussions	9	3	0
Faster project implementation	7	3	2
More trust	11	1	0
Higher rates of participation	10	2	0

PE Plan	Yes	No
Have and follow a PE Plan	4	8

PE Area for Use	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
Parks & Recreation	12	0	0	0
Land Use & Planning	12	0	0	0
Transportation & Infrastructure	12	0	0	0
Law Enforcement	10	1	0	1
Housing	12	0	0	0
Homelessness	8	2	0	2
Electoral/Voting	10	1	0	1
Budgeting	12	0	0	0
Health/Social Services Delivery	5	2	0	5
Education	5	2	0	5
Immigrant Integration/Related Issues	7	1	0	4
Pensions & OPEB	10	1	0	1

Strategies Used	Use	Don't
Newsletter	12	0
Newsletter by Mail	5	7
Newsletter by Email	12	0
Newsletter on Website	12	0
Community News on Website	12	0
Draft Budgets Online	12	0
Data Transparency Portal	8	4
Online Public Records Request	10	2
Freq. Requests on Website	7	5

APPENDIX D: Summary Agency Views of Public Engagement (cont'd)

Improve Intent Strategies	Regularly Use	Sometimes Use	Don't Use
In Job Description	6	4	2
Received Training	5	5	2
Summarize Complexity	10	2	0
Clear Language	11	1	0
Timely Communication	12	0	0

Rate the PE Culture	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement
Improves decision-making	6	6	0
Public as Partners	6	6	0
Full Public Consideration	10	2	0
Proactive & Wide	6	6	0

How Broaden Participation	Regularly Use	Sometimes Use	Don't Use
Build and Nurture Relationships	10	2	0
Regularly Distribute Information	8	4	0
Timely Information	9	3	0
Welcoming	11	1	0
In HS & Colleges	2	4	6

APPENDIX E: Platforms Used to Engage The Public

Technology Platforms	Agencies Using
Webcasting	Corte Madera, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Novato, San Anselmo, San Rafael, Sausalito, Tiburon, County of Marin
Facebook	Corte Madera, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Novato, San Anselmo, San Rafael, Sausalito, Tiburon, County of Marin
Twitter	Larkspur, Mill Valley, Novato, San Anselmo, San Rafael, Sausalito, Tiburon, County of Marin
Texts	Belvedere, Corte Madera, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Novato, San Anselmo, San Rafael, Sausalito, Tiburon, County of Marin
Mobile Apps	Corte Madera, Mill Valley, San Rafael, Sausalito, Tiburon, County of Marin
Online Forums	Fairfax, Novato, Sausalito, County of Marin

Platforms All Agencies Use		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Websites ✓ Nextdoor ✓ Emailing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Public Notices ✓ Press Releases ✓ Direct Mailing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Public Hearings ✓ Town Hall Meetings ✓ Small face-to-face discussions & personal interactions ✓ Workshops ✓ Surveys